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THE GOSPEL AT CORINTH

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THE GOSPEL AT CORINTH

BY

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THE GOSPEL AT CORINTH

THE GOSPEL AT CORINTH

I

THE DISCOVERY AND THE DREAM

I Cor. 3, 8: "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

St. Paul was evidently a fundamentalist,—though I doubt whether the folk who call themselves by that name nowadays would acknowledge him as of their brotherhood. For in his day he was the most modern of modernists. He was the apostle of a flaming novelty in religion. What, indeed, in the year 56 could have been more fantastically modern than Christianity? This Jesus whom Paul preached had been dead twenty-five years, more or less; and yet he goes through the cities of Asia Minor and Greece declaring this very recent person Jesus to be the one and only fundamental. Do you wonder that the Jewish rabbis grew angry and the Greek philosophers scornful? The impudence of it! This man and his mushroom religion! "What about Moses?" cried the Jew; "and what about the Law? What about circumcision? What about the old tried fundamentals?" "And what about Socrates?" cried the Greek; "and what about Plato and Aristotle? What about Epicurus? What about the Stoa? What about *the* fundamentals?"

I

But Paul turned out to be the true fundamentalist after all. He had made a great discovery; by some miracle of insight, he had discovered that God had lately given the world a new start. We take Paul for granted; and we fail to grasp the sheer magnificence of his achievement. He must—at any time—be a great man who can ascend into some watchtower in his own soul, far above the ebb and flow of daily happening, and survey the human scene in its length and breadth, its rises and falls, its nights and days; and who then can discern the signs of the times and declare them. Standing in the thick of life, where most of us spend our days, we see event following event in an undistinguished procession; and the course of this world seems an unintelligible blur. We have no perspective which enables us to distinguish the molehill from the mountain. Some of us indeed mistake molehills for mountains; and the mountains escape us altogether. But here was a man who had the wit to see that what others saw as the most insignificant of molehills was the highest of all the mountains of history, who saw in the life and death of an obscure peasant no less than a new beginning for mankind. I say that that was magnificent insight; and the man who made the discovery was a giant and a genius of the spirit.

I confess to being aweary of the tendency to belittle Paul. For some years, we have been told to go "back to Christ,"—a good thing to do. But I have less and less patience, the more I live with Paul, with the idea that he threw a smoke screen over the lucid simplicity of Jesus. First and last, we have to keep in mind that

St. Paul was the man who discovered the cosmic significance of Jesus, and related His appearance to the general course of history; who first saw Jesus as a world-figure and translated Him, so to speak, into the idiom of universality. It is undoubtedly true that some things in Paul's writings are no longer relevant: but that is simply because, like the rest of us, he was a child of his time and spoke the speech of his time. But a great deal that looks to us like fog in Paul's writings is really fog in our own minds. We do not understand him. He uses figures of speech and we treat them as dogmas; he breaks out into prose poetry and we will insist on regarding it as theology. And then we complain that he misrepresents Jesus. But he remains the man who did this amazing thing,—that he perceived that in Jesus of Nazareth God was beginning to remake this world of men.

II

Now, this extraordinary feat of insight had back of it a deep and heroic moral realism. He saw and did not shrink from declaring the utter moral bankruptcy of the age he lived in. Look it up in your Caird, your Glover, your Gilbert Murray; and you will see how with one consent they speak of the spiritual exhaustion of the time; and then turn to the first chapter of Romans, and you will see how this contemporary Jew saw it;—a world gone wrong, rotten with a contagion of moral plague. It was a spectacle of terrific miscarriage, of a creation sunk into the bondage of corruption. Do you remember Newman's famous passage in which he summarizes the strange "moving picture" of human history? "To consider the world in its

length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their natural alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things as from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary, hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world,'—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal? And to this, that he also calls a "heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact," the only explanation he can give is that "the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity." I venture to think that no man whose moral sense works competently can reach any other judgment upon the spectacle of history: that is how it has always looked to men of moral sensitiveness and clear understanding. So it looked to Paul, a world given up "unto a reprobate mind." And the circumstance that you can find spaces of light amid the gathering darkness,—as for example, the bright shining of Hebrew prophecy, the power and loveliness of the Greek achievement in letters and architecture,—only serve to accentuate the intolerable gloom. So complete was the ruin, so irretrievable the miscarriage, that the only hope for man-

kind lay in a new beginning. The old society was past reformation, past healing, past patching up; its rescue from decadence and from being forever discarded from the purpose and the presence of God required a process no less drastic than regeneration, a new birth on a cosmic scale.

III

And (as I said) it was St. Paul's distinction that he perceived that God had given the race a new birth in Jesus of Nazareth. But he was concerned with the future no less than with the past and he dreamed his great dream,—a dream that grew logically out of his great discovery,—the dream of a new humanity. I have no time now to show how this Jew escaped from the narrow enclosure of his racial prejudices and learnt to think in terms of the whole world. But the sight he saw beyond the horizon was of a single new race of redeemed and refashioned men, filling the whole earth, of old barriers utterly broken down and those that were afar off brought nigh in Christ. And I do not think we begin to understand Paul unless we keep steadily before us this superb and moving vision of a rescued, regenerate, and unified humanity. Nor do we understand his conception of the Church unless we realize that he thought of it as the organ and the nucleus of the coming race. It was the promise and the beginning of a new human society in the world. And when he spoke, as he did at Thessalonica, of "another King, one Jesus," he was thinking of a new kind of social order,—not of a new religious cult, not of a new sort of piety, but of a social order which should in due time displace and supersede all other existing social orders whatsoever,—even the Empire itself. It was in-

deed the coming Empire and the Emperor was the "living Christ." But a new kind of Empire. For all human society hitherto had rested upon a political basis; the new society would stand on a religious basis. The Empire of Cæsar was held together by authority and force. The Empire of Christ would cohere by the invincible might of grace and love. You miss the whole point of St. Paul's apostolate if you think of him merely as going about the Empire with a new brand of religion that was an improvement on Judaism, and establishing little societies here and there to practice it. The man had set out upon the task of building a new world; and if the splendor and the audacity of it does not stagger your imagination, you had better go home and examine yourself. Away in the distance he could see a vast construction, wide as the world, with "all the body fully framed and knit together, growing into a holy temple in the Lord": and it is of this temple that he is thinking when he says that *other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

IV

Now I am not concerned about showing you the greatness of Paul so much as the greatness of his discovery and the greatness of his dream; and to labor as I may to enable you to enter into the noble spaciousness of his hope and his design. For these things are still inherent and implied in the Gospel committed to us. As we see Paul alone or with a little company wandering about the Empire, gathering small knots of people together in lowly homes in mean streets in this city and that, it looks a trivial and unpromising affair; but those were the days of small things; and you only get the

measure of the business in hand when you see the vision and the plan that drove the man and his friends upon this seemingly wild, impossible enterprise. The Church has in its outward aspect grown to be an institution of some magnitude; but the discovery and the dream that upheld and governed it have become faint and dim in its soul. It is dull and dead to the thrill of that magnificent hope. It is a base thing to criticize the Church which is our mother; but here self-criticism is only open confession; and that, as we know, is good for the soul. Let us confess how shamefully we have fallen from the apostolic height of vision and hope. Let us confess how narrowly we have conceived of the Church, how little a thing it has seemed in our eyes, how we have condemned it to small enterprises, to timid programs, how we have been satisfied to have it there to nurse our small souls, a sanctuary from the harsh demands of the world, a week-end rest cure. Thank God, it can be all these things; but it is ceasing to be even these things because it has forgotten the greater office. The Church is an army with banners, an invading host following a fiery cross; it is the organ of a transcendental imperialism, of a new humanity in Christ. During the Boer War, it became the custom in England to describe those who were opposed to it as "little Englanders"; it was merely a political insult and had just so much value as those things commonly have. But the Church is and has been cursed by a religious little-Englandism, a spiritual parochialism, a paralyzing sectarianism,—the very antithesis of its imperial calling. And the only antidote to this poison seems to me to lie in recalling Paul's great discovery and recapturing his great dream and letting the magnificence of discovery and dream sink into our minds

until we too are possessed by them and sent as that untiring vagrant Apostle was in his day upon the momentous errand of proclaiming the discovery and making the dream come true.

But we cannot recapture the dream until we have remade the discovery for ourselves. We have to share Paul's astonishing divination of the secret of Jesus; and as we look back on it in a much longer perspective, it ought to be easier for us to make it. I do not for my part see how any intelligent student can escape Paul's conviction that in Jesus of Nazareth God was giving the world a new start. He was laying a new foundation for the life of mankind; and that foundation was Jesus Christ. Not, please observe, a doctrine about Him, or a theory of His person, or a form of teaching, but Himself. These other things have their uses; but not in the foundation. It is Himself, *Himself,* His personality, His life,—the life He passed on to men like Paul and Peter and John, and which by the mercy of God and by the perennial activity of His spirit is still being quickened in men. That unique, specific, divine virtue of life which we descry in Jesus, other foundation than this can no man lay. Our fundamentalist friends are confusing the foundation with an architectural theory. The foundation is not a thing of ideas but a solid affair of experience; it is not a number of formulæ, but a quality of life. It is what St. Paul calls "Christ in us." The hour is too far spent to enable us to analyze the special character of this life; but it is in some inscrutable fashion the kindling of divinity in our flesh, the reincarnation of God in us. The world that St. Paul saw falling into ruin had built itself up on a principle of self-interest, upon loose stones of parochialism and particularism. And we are

not cured of this error yet. Some of our friends below the border have spoken much about one hundred per cent Americanism latterly; but it should not be hard to see that a one hundred per cent American is by so much something less than a whole man. And there are true-blue Presbyterians who are for the same reason and in the same way something less than Christians. We need to have our patriotic and denominational loyalties baptized into the love of Christ, and they will come out of the waters of baptism enlarged and transfigured into nobler and rarer emotions, not unfit for the Kingdom of God. And the essential quality of this new life in Christ is that it is no longer life in the part but in the whole, not in a sect but in the body of Christ, not in the here and now alone, but in time and eternity at once, not in a country but in humanity, not life in this, that or the other, but in God. . . .

That is the foundation; and it must be laid *in* us. Whether it has been laid in you, you alone can tell. But if you are in doubt about it, make sure, make sure of it. And round about us are some that lack it; and our blessed task it is to lay the foundation in them too, the only foundation on which they and we can truly and nobly build the house of life, and add our share to the structure of the ultimate temple of God.

II

ON KEEPING FIRST THINGS FIRST

I Cor. 1, 14: "I thank God that I baptized none of you. . . ."

I thank God that I baptized none of you,—well, yes, to be sure, there was Gaius and Crispus,—but even with this qualification, it sounds (don't you think?) a little truculent, speech as of a man whose patience was done. Paul, being human, had his moments of exasperation. There was a day once in Antioch, when Peter had gone back shamefully upon the missionary ideal of the young Church, *and,* said Paul, *I withstood him to the face;* and it is reported that there was some very plain speaking. After expostulating with the Galatians through the length of a letter, he ends with a very peremptory word: *From henceforth let no man trouble me,* as who should say, "I am done; I have no use for these impostors who come down from Jerusalem or for the addlepates whom they fool. I have my credentials; and I have my work to do." Here at Corinth there was some excuse for irritation. God's work was miscarrying. The Christian society that St. Paul had gathered together was falling to pieces; its members were hiving off into little cliques, each sporting its own label. One wore the badge of Peter, another that of Paul, a third that of Apollos, while a fourth with splendid arrogance monopolized the badge of Christ. It was not an edifying spectacle; and Paul

was, as we should say, really furious that his name had been dragged into the affair. "Why," he seems to ask, "should I be treated in this way? What have I done to deserve it? Was Paul crucified for you? I thank God that I baptized none of you. I have given no excuse to any one to use my name to rend the body of Christ."

Well, it is an old story, now; and there may seem to be little point in raising this ancient trouble from the dead. But it has a curiously modern smack about it. It is one of those stories that tell us how stubborn human nature is, how slow to change. We might have expected that after all this time we should have outgrown this childish factiousness; but obviously we have not. And that is discouraging. But on the other hand, there is comfort in the reflection that in spite of the seemingly incurable contentiousness of Christian folk, the Church is still in the field and the Gospel is still preached. It is sure evidence of the vitality of the Christian Church and of the abiding truth of the Christian Gospel that both have survived so long the shameful folly of their friends. But what this story may best do for us is to recall us to a sense of proportion in our handling of the things of God; and that is something that we very badly need.

I

Paul prays in his Epistle to the Philippians that his readers might have (according to the marginal rendering of the American Revision) the ability *to distinguish the things that differ:* and that is a great and precious gift. Mrs. Carlyle used to say that the Great Bad was mixing things up; and a great deal of the trouble in life arises from our habit (due partly to in-

dolence, partly to muddleheadedness) of lumping things together and leaving them unsorted. But great and necessary as is the gift of distinguishing things according to their nature, it is no less great and necessary that we should be able to distinguish them according to their importance and their value. Among the good things of life, there are primary things, and secondary things, and so on through a long hierarchy down to the plane of useful trifles and knick knacks. He is a wise man and a happy who has all things in life rightly arranged along his scale of values; but not many of us are happy and wise in that way. We are continually putting the cart before the horse, putting secondary things in the first place. Indeed, we moderns are committing this error on a quite colossal scale. For we are steadily and sedulously subordinating *life* itself to its accessories, spending it upon things which ought themselves to minister to it. We live in order to eat, drink, and be merry, when we should eat, drink, and be merry in order to live. The business of life is the realization of life, the purgation, the refinement, the increase of life, making it a thing of goodness and truth and beauty, evoking and revealing its hidden divinity. But we are spending it upon aims that, compared with its real ends, are trivial and contemptible; and we are rapidly losing the palate to appreciate its rare and thrilling vintage. In this, this generation is more destitute and poverty-stricken than some other generations that have gone before us; for we have enthroned Commerce and made it lord of life. We live for business; we think of life in terms of business; I saw the other day a statement made in an argument for lessening infant mortality that the economic value of a saved infant life to the community was so many (I forget how many) dollars.

So that we have come to this pit of insanity at last,—that life has a cash value! God have mercy upon us! We have demanded that education should provide economic efficiency; and we have looked to our recreation and our religion to repair for us the wear and tear of the economic grind. And all the time, the place of the economic process in relation to the rest of life is precisely the place of the kitchen in the home, essential, important, certainly, but still subordinate, for its function is to sustain the physical basis and framework of life. Man must have bread to eat and clothes to wear; but when he is fed and clothed, he is still only on the threshold of the main business of life. And some day, weary and disillusioned and insolvent in spirit, we shall wake up and discover what we have done,—that all this time we have put and kept the cart before the horse. But it will be a great day for us and for the world, when we make that discovery.

This same topsy-turvydom of mind pursues us in lesser things. The other day I read in an essay by Mr. Max Beerbohm, how in the last century literary criticism was regarded as more important than literature itself. He draws a picture of the critic as a lofty pontifical person who sat in solemn judgment upon the poor trembling author who created the literature he criticized; but that is an absurdity we have already outgrown. It other things, however, it remains with us devastatingly. Take, for instance, our conception of the State; the State is purely a means to an end, an instrument invented for the purpose of ministering to the happiness and of safeguarding the freedom of men and women. It is an institution for regulating the human traffic; and it is worthy of respect and obedience only as it does its job. But think how we have vested it

with something like divinity, ascribed to it an absoluteness of power over life and limb; and a good many philosophers (who ought to have known better) since Hegel have fallen down and worshiped it. That again is putting the cart before the horse. The State is an organ for creating a healthy, happy, and abounding social life,—neither more nor less than that; and it is the business of sane men and women to keep it in its place and at its job and not let it come, as it has too much come, to lord it over life. And so one might go on into a dozen other regions in which we consent to this insane inversion of values. . . .

II

But probably it is worse and more disastrous in religion than it is anywhere else: and here we are doing it all the time. I wonder when we shall realize that religion is primary and that such things as theology, church government and the like are secondary. I doubt whether you can find in the history of religion any division that has been caused by a purely religious issue. On the contrary you will find that in a hopelessly divided Church, Christian folk can still join together in the purely religious acts of praise and prayer. This morning we are singing hymns by a Catholic and a Unitarian; and in the long tradition of Christian prayer across nineteen centuries and more, the soul speaks the same language and utters the same essential plea. But how we have fought about Church Government and what oceans of splenetic ink have been spilt in the quarrels about Episcopacy and Presbytery and Independency among English-speaking folk alone! And as for theology, the heat and passion of our

polemics have become a proverb. When men today animadvert upon controversial bitterness, they always recall the "odium theologicum." It is a curious reflection that the Body of Christ has been torn to tatters, not by divisions over primary things but by quarrels about secondary things.

And St. Paul's whole meaning here is that the Corinthian Church was falling apart over secondary things. What had happened was perhaps something of this kind: Peter represented the conservative tendency, the old Jewish entail in the Church; and Paul was the radical. And the conservative-minded Corinthians called themselves the Petrines; and the radical-minded called themselves the Paulines. Then Apollos came from Alexandria, very learned and saying wonderful things about the Logos; and the highbrows, the intellectuals, thought all this very fine and said, "We are Apollonians." And then the rest, bewildered by these proceedings, said, "We'll have nothing to do with any of you: we will just be simple, undenominational Christians"; and they formed themselves into another faction. The poor little Church was sad to see. And Paul comes down upon this confusion of voices with a thunder of shattering questions: *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?* "Think again, my friends. I thank God I baptized only two or three of you, so that none of you have a right to wear my name as a label to divide Christ." And what lies at the heart of this remonstrance is this: that what matters is not the fundamentalism of Peter or the radicalism of Paul, or the intellectualism of Apollos, or the affected simplicity of the "simple" Christians, but the common religious experience of all of them and that towering fact upon which it rested, the Cross of Christ.

He puts the same thing at a more personal angle lower down. *For Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel.* Baptism was the rite of initiation into the Church, into the fellowship of the Christian mysteries. You might have supposed that it would be a most important thing to admit people to church-membership; that Paul might have prided himself on having brought Crispus and Gaius and Stephanas and his family into the Church. But he does not attach much importance to it; apparently he did not think that church-membership was the really important thing. And of course he would not. What was important for Crispus and Gaius was not their baptism but the Christian experience which went before it,—the conversion, the new birth, the illumination, call it what you will. It was well for them that they should be baptized Christians; but what at bottom mattered was that they were new creations. And what was important to Paul was the Gospel that made them new creations, the "good news" which led them into the new experience.

III

Is there not here a moral for us today? The heart of the Christian Gospel lies not in a theology, whether conservative or radical, but in an experience and in an attitude of the whole life. The Gospel is not a set of doctrines; and it is great enough to hold within itself a dozen theologies and hardly know the difference. It is only our human arrogance that supposes that one's own set of doctrines, one's own peculiar interpretation of it, holds the whole truth of the Gospel, as though we could contain this ocean of good news in our little

buckets! Let us be quit of that foolishness. You remember Browning's lines about Jesus:

> That one Face, far from vanish rather grows,
> And decomposes but to recompose,
> Becomes my universe that feels and knows. . . .

Universe,—that is the only word for it. The Christian experience is entrance upon a new world, a world as wide as God Himself; a world wide enough to give all our little theologies elbow-room in it, if they are sincere and honest. After all, the peculiar cast of any man's theology will reflect the special bent of his own temperament; but here is a world within which you may find the philosophy that interprets your life, and air to breathe that meets your need. You in your small corner and I in mine should be able to live in it without treading on each other's feet or bruising each other's hearts. And if you tell me that I have to come into your little corner or consider myself out in the cold, forgive me if I only smile; *I have not so learned Christ.* I too know whom I have believed; and how can you tell what transactions have passed between my Lord and me?

There is, too, that eternal Hill. When Professor Stewart Macalister was exploring the mound of Gezer in Palestine, he did not uncover the whole mound but dug a trench across it. He dug down through one stratum of débris after another until he had reconstructed the history of the various civilizations that had passed over that place. And across this everlasting Hill of Calvary, you may dig a trench; and that is all you can do: and the trench that you dig will tell you just so much of its meaning. A good many trenches have been dug across it; and the diggers have told the

tale of what they found. But even yet the half has not been told. There have been many interpretations of the Cross; and every interpretation that has brought help and healing to men's souls is so far true. But do you think that we have heard the last word about it? Do you think there is nothing more to tell? You see just what your mind can contain: but

> The love of God is broader
> Than the measure of man's mind. . . .

And there is in the Cross what eye hath not yet seen nor ear heard. I am sorry for the man who stands before it with veiled face, face veiled with a complete, water-tight, hermetically-sealed theology. He has the right to stand there and see what he can; and if he tells me that I see nothing or that I see wrong, once more I smile. How can he tell what ineffable wonder I see? But let me put my arm through his, and let us stand together on the Hill; let us each see what we may; but let us both be glad that whatever we see, we *know* that our feet are on a rock; and let us both say together,

> Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
> Save in the death of Christ my God. . . .

And we shall know that this experience which we share, this experience which holds us, mind and heart, is something far greater than any definition that our minds may reach or form of words that our lips may utter. And in that knowledge, the Petrine conservative, the Pauline radical, the Apollonian intellectual, and the simple Christian who has no stomach for subtleties may live together in love within the undivided Christ.

III

THE DIVINE FOLLY

I Cor. 1, 21: "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe."

You can hardly read this chapter with any imagination without realizing that the writer is having a good time. There is no reconnoitering here, no pussy-footing; no concern for niceties of style; but hard, straight, shrewd blows delivered with a sort of inspired recklessness. The writer is not fastidious about his munitions either; he turns the enemy's weapons against him. "Fool," said the enemy. "Very well," says St. Paul, "fool let it be; and I'm proud of it." And he hugs the insult: he rings the changes on it. "My job is a fool's job,—the foolishness of preaching; the thing I preach is a joke,—the foolishness of the Cross, and my God is a fool,—the foolishness of God." And when a man takes your insults in that way, what is a poor enemy to do?

I

I think I understand what was behind it,—something that had happened at Athens. There somebody had called him a babbler: and the Greek word was more derogatory than that. It was the word *spermologos,* and apparently the picture in the word is that of a sparrow picking up seed off the street. It was the lofty way of the Athenian highbrow of waving away an

idea which did not fit into his scheme. "Sir," he would say, "you talk like a sparrow"; or as we might say, "You've got the brains of a rabbit." And though Paul was at great pains to show them the sense of the great thing that was burning in him, they could make neither head nor tail of it. To them, it still seemed the merest nonsense, and they laughed it off the Areopagus. They took for a joke what was to Paul the surest and sanest thing in life. And, I suspect, he went away from Athens rather sore and disappointed and depressed. And on the road to Corinth, he had a reaction. *"Fool,* am I?" he cried! "Well, then, let me glory in it. For if this be folly, then Christ is a fool; and so is God. Everything is a joke . . . but what a glorious joke! And I am glad and proud to be part of the joke,"—this joke which he knew in his own soul to be the final sanity, the ultimate, rock-bottom rationality. And that was, I fancy, the mood in which he first reached Corinth; that was how he preached, exulting in this divine eccentricity that the great philosophers of Athens could not make sense of. And now after many months, writing to the Corinthians, the whole affair comes back to him; but by this time the insult had lost its sting. The joke had already vindicated itself; the results had proved that the foolishness of God was wiser than men. . . . He laughs best who laughs last.

But it was not only derision that the early preaching of the Gospel had provoked. In another quarter it had excited anger and bitterness. The Greeks might laugh at it; but the Jews hated and execrated it, and those who preached it. The Greeks dismissed it because the idea was not in their books, though there was an old story of theirs—about a certain Socrates—that should have warned them against

treating it in that way; the Jews hated it because it contradicted their dearest hope. They had been for a long time expecting a sign, a manifestation of divine power that would sweep their Roman masters out of their country, a Messiah who would lead them to victory and a proud independence. But here was this man Paul—and himself a Jew too—preaching that the Messiah had appeared in that Nazarene Jesus whom Pilate had rightly put to death; and this Paul had the audacity to say that the execution of this paltry and insignificant Galilean was the great Messianic act of deliverance for which they had waited all these generations. The thing was intolerable; it was not to be endured. It was preposterous; and all pious Jewry became almost speechless with exasperation. All they could say was, "It's a scandal, it's a scandal!" (The word "stumbling-block" is the Greek word *skandalon.*) And so Paul got it from both sides, one side cried out, "Fool"; the other side cried, "Scoundrel!"

But that, as you know, is the customary lot of the innovator. Walter Bagehot in an essay on Lady Mary Wortley Montague tells how she brought back to England from the East the practice of inoculation. "Like most improvers," he says, "she was roughly spoken to; medical men were angry because the practice was not in their books; and conservative men were cross at the agony of a new idea." There you have a perennial human situation: and in a small way, it illustrates the commotion which the preaching of the Gospel excited in that world of Greeks and Jews. It is the usual lot of the new idea that it outrages all sorts of human susceptibility. At Athens, the Cross was an outrage on philosophy; at Jerusalem, it was an outrage on religion; at Philippi, it was, as you remember, con-

strued into an outrage on patriotism. "These men," so they said, "do exceedingly trouble our city and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive or to observe, being Romans"; and Paul and Silas had to go to jail for it. And you might have thought that with the Cross before our eyes these nineteen hundred years we should have been cured of this stupid obstructive hostility to a new thing in the world. In its day, the Cross was a great rebel sign against the sky; and every hard and ugly name that men could think of or devise was hurled against it. But it has outlived its enemies. I wonder how long yet it will take human nature to learn its plain lesson of toleration.

II

The real trouble of mankind still is that it has not outgrown the herd-mind. We still move in masses. Of course, behind this, there is a good deal of biology. Away back near the beginnings of life, you will discover an impulse of association; a coming together for mutual protection. And you see that impulse operating all the way up,—in a beehive or an anthill, in a herd of cattle or in a pack of wolves; and it was simply and plainly a device of self-preservation, a scheme for survival. And it is so still among men. But the spirit of life had intended something different for man. You can see how slowly and patiently it experimented in producing a form of life that should have individuality and independence, that should be able to stand on its own feet and live its own life, and govern its own behavior, that great process of creation that made man—in that fine old word—"a living soul." The herd and the pack have only one mind between them; man was

made to have a mind of his own. But he still has an unshed inheritance of herd-mind and this at its worst becomes the ugly and horrible thing which we call the herd-mind; which is indeed not a mind at all, but a wild, irrational collective impulse which stampedes the mind.

It would take us too far afield to discuss the psychology of this thing. All I wish to point out here is that it is the survival of this protective herd-mind in mankind that always resists the entry of a new idea. Every class and every caste, every community and every country has its own house of life—a complex of orthodoxies and customs, of familiar ideas and habits. Within this circle, the individual moves easily and securely. But let any new idea or new practice intrude within this sacred circle, and immediately the caste or the community is disturbed; it scents a menace to its familiar comfort and security, closes up its ranks and is at once up in arms. It will have nothing to do with the stranger. It will call it ugly names, charge it with criminal intention, and often it kills the individual who imported it.

And yet here you have the paradox of the whole matter. Dissent has always been the growing point of human society. The dissenting opinion, the non-conformist belief has always shown the road to better things. Has it not become a commonplace that the heresy of yesterday has become the orthodoxy of the morrow? And from this there emerge two plain morals which I shall but mention and leave with you to think about. *First* that it is the business of education to educate us,—and educate means literally to lead out,—to lead us out of the bondage of the herd-mind, to give us independent and self-controlled minds,

to give to the individual a principle and a faculty of valuation, of criticism, of discrimination and selection, so that he may be able to distinguish between things that differ, to prove all things and to hold fast to that which is good. And *second,* that the condition of all wholesome, sure and pacific progress lies in the culture of the tolerant mind. For be very sure that that community which is so bound by the herd-mind that it is intolerant of dissent from its orthodoxies and its prejudices is under sentence of death; and the community which is incapable of dissent is already dead.

III

And now let us get back to Paul. For if you look more closely at what he has in mind, you will undoubtedly discover that if this present world had not got so used to the idea of the Cross and to the preaching of it, it might even now react to it much as these old Jews and Greeks and Romans did. For undoubtedly, judged by our conventional standards there is still a strain of irrationality about the whole thing.

Take this matter of preaching, to begin with. Doesn't it strike you sometimes as a curious, even a comic thing that I should stand up here and speak to you, arguing and expounding and exhorting? I confess to you that it seems to me—not seldom—as I begin to do it, a thing so preposterous, so impossibly presumptuous on my part, that I wonder why on earth I do it and why on earth you endure it. Yet there it is,—I go on doing it; you go on enduring it. Why? It has been going on a long time too. It must have—as the biologists say—some survival value. Carlyle thought well of it:

"That a man stand there and speak of spiritual things to men, it is beautiful;—even in its great obscuration and decadence, it is among the beautifullest, most touching objects one sees on the Earth. This Speaking Man has indeed, in these times, wandered terribly from the point; has, alas, as it were, totally lost sight of the point, yet, at bottom whom have we to compare with him? Of all public functionaries boarded and lodged on the Industry of Modern Europe, is there one worthier of the board he has? A man even professing, and never so languidly making still some endeavor, to save the souls of men: contrast him with a man professing to do little but shoot the partridges of men! I wish he could find the point again, this Speaking One; and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy; for there is need of him yet! The Speaking Function, this of Truth coming to us with a living voice, nay in a living shape, and as a concrete practical exemplar: this, with all our Writing and Printing Functions, has a perennial place. Could he but find the point again——"

I turn to that passage again and again for aid and comfort. But still I am puzzled. This, however, I do know,—how again and again the poor thing that has left my lips has been transfigured on its way to the hearers' ears, transfigured into a greater thing and into a quickening thing. And when I am told of these things, I have to say quietly to myself: I believe in the Holy Ghost. You cannot make sense of it on any other hypothesis: otherwise, look at it as you will, it is an absurd thing, a quite ridiculous thing. It is the assumption on which we come together, that God is somehow, somewhere in this business, that makes it tolerable and sane and rational. In any case, just now,

it seems to most people something not even to laugh at, but something to ignore. Evidently the speaking one has, as Carlyle says, missed the point altogether, and he is consequently of no account, as he deserves to be. But the poor fellow is not wholly to blame. Perhaps his word is short-circuited by a dead, unspiritual hearing; and so there he stands, beating the air, a ludicrous figure. A small company of people were discussing a preacher a little time ago; and one of the company said: "What I feel about him is that *he is seeking with me.*" I think that that is the best thing that a preacher can ever hear about himself. It was said of the "Old Vic," that great theater in a London working-class district which has performed every play that is the authentic work of Shakespeare,—a unique record,—that there the audience is part of the cast. And it is something like that,—when the preacher is in the pew and the congregation is in the pulpit, and the spirit of Christ is in both,—that saves preaching from being an absurd and meaningless pantomime. It is the coöperation, the concert, the community, the togetherness in the presence of God that saves me from being an arrogant fool for preaching and that saves you who listen to me from being sharers in a silly comedy. So that it is as much your affair as mine.

IV

And then there is the subject matter of the preaching. Not long ago, Mr. Bernard Shaw, speaking with less than his customary insight, laughed at the doctrine of salvation by the gibbet. So that you see the Cross has not ceased to be foolishness yet. And Lord Birkenhead the other day in a rectorial address at Glasgow University dismissed all idealism from politics with

the most cynical overt gesture made by a public man in our time,—which means that he too thinks the Cross foolishness. And what he has said in public, a good many others say in private, while, the more's the shame, they pay a public life-service to it. Now, I cannot say at the end of a sermon anything very much worth saying about the rationality, the sanity of the Cross. And it would be foolish even to begin. Let us grant at once that on the face of things, in a world like this, in which men are at each other's throats, scrambling for material good, thinking in terms of power, territory, money, "Britannia rules the waves," *Deutschland über Alles,* "America first," and the like, the principle of renunciation or sacrifice is unmitigated nonsense,—that is, provided that things as they seem are the actual reality of life. Then the Cross is just moonshine; and the Gospel at the best a pretty fairy tale; and there's nothing for it but to take Lord Birkenhead at his word and hand the world over to the devil and get what joy we can in the narrowing interstices of its mounting tragedy. But I confess to you that I find it incredible that a man of intelligence who has been through the calamities of these last nine years should not perceive that the way of the world is a way of destructive madness, that its secular history has been a long carnival of folly punctuated by a recurring dance of death . . . and that the inevitable end of the road is some unimaginable hell of pain and horror and final annihilation. And amid this cold and cruel Bedlam, there comes here and there a lucid moment to man. The other day, I received through the kindness of a friend a resolution passed by the legislature of South Dakota: "That the people of South Dakota be enjoined to address themselves at once to renewed effort to restore

the balance between the spiritual and the material, that our children be brought up in the precepts of fundamental righteousness." Not exactly a flaming beacon, a fiery cross; but an authentic beam from the Holy Hill; and, please God, a promise of more. And we may come at last to see that in our long human story, that one hour on Calvary was the one clearing of utter, sheer, undoubted sanity amid the surrounding madness; and seeing it we may go thither to be cleansed of our folly. And if it be folly to point men to that Cross, then I am content and proud to be one of the fools that do it; aye, and to glory in this divine insanity. But let me say here, also, that this is as much your affair as it is mine.

IV

THE DIVINE PARADOX

I Cor. 1, 26-28: "For behold your calling, brethren . . . bring to nought the things that are."

Dr. Jacks in one of his stories makes a character propound a new view of the person of Christ, namely, that He was man in so far as He did what was expected of Him, and that He was God in so far as He did the unexpected. And I suspect that this is a view which St. Paul could have shared. For Paul's God is a God of surprise, a specialist in the unusual, whose normal is the abnormal, whose ordinary is the extraordinary. There was, for instance, his own case. It was to St. Paul every morning that he rose from sleep a fresh surprise to find himself where he was,—*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles.* And then there was the everlasting astonishment of the Cross, that staggering paradox that sent the minds of orthodox philosophers and theologians and politicians reeling, paralyzing the vocal into exasperated speechlessness, quickening the silent into potent, joyful speech. And then, too, there was the amazing spectacle of the preacher, and his preaching,—with its inconceivably naïve faith in the power of simple utterance, without sanction of authority or confirmation of power or support of logic. I do not wonder that

St. Paul made some people feel that they were standing on their heads. And this was not all, by any means. There was the singular and astounding paradox of the Church.

Now you know very well that if we wanted to start a new society, almost the first thing we should do would be to give it respectability and impressiveness by getting together a list of prominent names to endorse it. We should seek out the support of the important, influential, learned and wealthy; and we should print their names on our letter paper. Whether this is right or wrong, wise or foolish, I suppose depends on the circumstances; but when God set about forming a society for the purposes of His Kingdom, He did not go that way about it. He forgot about the intellectuals, the social leaders, the aristocracy, and the merchant princes; He sought out the insignificant, the anonymous, the small people who cut no public figure. Not indeed that the others were excluded; but they had to come in by the same door as the rest, on the same ground of insignificance and anonymity. And St. Paul's point here is that this way of doing things had vindicated itself. We were not, he says, in those days very much to look at,—a sort of awkward squad we were,—Dick, Tom and Harry from the wharfside; and a few poor women; the grocer round the corner; a couple of slaves; some clerks from the currant warehouses; but he says, see how we have grown! The wise laughed at us; the pious persecuted us; the high and mighty scorned us: but today, we have planted the Church through the Empire, even in Rome itself. *By their fruits shall ye know them.* The proof of the pudding is in the eating; a policy is justified or condemned by its results. Well, says St. Paul, look at

the results. Not indeed that even then the Church had emerged from insignificance and anonymity; though already here and there, it had begun to make the orthodox—in religion and in politics and in business—rather uneasy. But everywhere men were believing in Jesus Christ and were being naturalized into His Kingdom. The weakness of God was proving stronger than man.

I

Yet the thing is, I think, easily explained. It was a process of natural selection. Whatever else it was, the Church was a great pioneering adventure in life; an experiment in a new kind of human society,—a society based not upon blood-kinship or authority or force but upon a personal religious life. It was a new thing in the world, breaking new ground; and if you go pioneering you cannot carry much luggage. The pioneer must travel light. And the impedimenta that men gather in life—property, learning, reputation, vested interests, social rank and the like—are handicaps upon a man's mobility and freedom. So that when the call comes, it is the unhandicapped people who are most able and likely to respond. There is nothing inherently wrong about holding property or high rank or having ponderous learning, nothing wrong that I can see so long as they are fairly and honestly come by; but those who accept them must accept with them this particular limitation,—that they are unlikely to become pioneers. Not indeed that they are necessarily shut out. If Onesimus the slave was called, no less was Philemon the slave owner. But the slave has the advantage. He has no slaves to think about. It is to the unencum-

bered that life most hopefully turns when it wants to break new ground.

And so when the first call of the new life was heard on lakeside and countryside in Galilee, it was fisherfolk and the like that heard it and obeyed. The Roman paid no attention to it; the ecclesiastics resisted it; the rich young ruler went away sorrowful. The people who (as the saying is) had a stake in the country were not hospitable to the call. Now and again, a Scribe, a Pharisee, a Roman officer heard it and obeyed; but it was the anonymous and the insignificant who heard it gladly. And so when the word went about the Mediterranean seaboard, it was not the scholars of Ephesus or of Alexandria who heard it, not the rich Greek and Jew merchants in Thessalonica or Antioch, nor the Imperial officers. They had "interests," as we say; and their interests kept them rooted where they were. They could not afford to hear the call. So it went past them, to the longshoreman of Corinth, to the slave of Philippi, to insignificant, nameless men and women, who could better afford to hear it, and did hear it and took their places in the vanguard of the new adventure, and went out pioneering with God. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were in the company; but the simple, the lowly, the things, as St. Paul says, that were nothing at all, the flotsam and the jetsam of that strange, sad, old world; and out of these God fashioned a new thing, made a new beginning in the world. The adventure did indeed miscarry, —in a fatal moment of compromise with the world; and it has not yet recovered its true original course. But there can be no doubt of the original intention or of the kind of material that went into the shaping of it.

II

And so it must, I think, in the main ever be. If, as it seems to some of us, life is today in the labor of bringing forth a new thing, it is the unencumbered who will give it welcome. Those of us who are past our youth and have given our hostages to the future, who are encumbered with many things, sadly tied to business, burdened with property and interests, handicapped by position or reputation, must, alas! settle down to the sorrowful probability that we can have no share in it. Not indeed that we are necessarily excluded, if we are ready to pay the price and able to pay it. And even if we cannot fall into the ranks of the chosen, this at least we may do: we may pray for the tolerant and unfearing spirit, for faith in life and in the God of life, aye and for a measure of the love and passion of Christ that will enable us, when unencumbered youth girds itself, as it seems to be doing today, for the long, arduous effort of recreating a ruined world, to send them forth with a cheer. Let us beware of letting our comfort or security, our fear or our faithlessness obstruct or resist the march of life. For indeed of all the tragedies that may befall mortal man, there is none deadlier or darker than that he should become a blind alley, a dead end in the increasing purpose of God.

And, after all, what chiefly matters,—whether we are with the flying column on a far frontier or at the base,—is that we should have life in ourselves; whether we are able to receive it and to pass it on. And it is of some significance that when God looked for the pioneer-general for the new advance, he did not find

him among the anonymous and the insignificant but in the seats of the mighty. If it were a matter of "interests," Paul did indeed have every imaginable handicap. Blue blood, a fine family tradition in the old faith, high academic standing,—the rising hope (to adapt Macaulay's saying about Gladstone) of those stern unbending Pharisees, who maintained the ancient integrity of Judaism,—all this Paul had, and more. No man was ever so rooted in the *status quo;* and you would have said that no man was more unlikely to be captured by this new doctrine, especially when you saw him breathing threatenings and slaughter against the partisans of this disturbing and dangerous novelty. But the man had vitality; he was charged with life; and it was impossible that he should go on spending his life on dead things. And God said: "This man has life; he belongs to Me." And when the time was ripe, He laid hold of him; and history has no more astonishing spectacle than that of this high-born, well-bred, scholarly man, who had been plainly marked for high ecclesiastical distinction in Jerusalem, doing the spade-work of the Kingdom of God in the mean streets and the little Bethels of the seaports and the cities of the Mediterranean littoral. You may search the secular no less than the sacred history of that age, and you will come back and say: This was the most living man of his time. That was why God chose him as captain-general of the great advance.

III

To have life in ourselves; that is the great matter. And the danger of our "interests," business, property, reputation, and so forth is—as Jesus said of the seed

that fell among thorns—that they choke the life that is in us. Life is a fluid thing, and it is never wholesome except when it is in a state of flux. Life that is arrested is life under sentence of death. And the peril to which every living man is exposed is that the things he gathers round him in life may form a sort of pocket in which the life that is in him is condemned to arrest and stagnation. You know that there are certain substances—radium is, I suppose, the most important of them—which are called radio-active, substances from which energy is all the time being radiated, which pour forth their very substance, as it were. And in the same way there are people who are spiritually radio-active, who radiate life all about them. You know that sometimes we say of a person a very damning thing; we say that he is "wooden." I do not think we are always just when we say this; for many men are condemned by heredity to a certain sluggishness of temperament; and they cannot help themselves that their reactions are slow. But there is a woodenness that people bring upon themselves: becoming by their own fault unreceptive, unresponsive, uncommunicative. Their spiritual texture becomes fibrous and lusterless; their spiritual arteries harden; no warm human contact can strike a spark out of them; nor do they ever strike a spark out of other men. They have become dead ends, blind alleys, back waters of life. But there are others so charged with vitality that they are as rivers of water in a dry land—as Jesus said they would be. *Out of them,* said He, *shall flow rivers of living water.* These are the people who revive our faith, quicken our hope, stimulate our energy, warm our hearts, restore to us the joy of living; they speak to us and make us glad to be alive; they touch us, and the dull world is trans-

figured. These are the spiritually radio-active people; the people who are alive.

And their secret is a simple one. The human soul is made open at both ends; and its health and strength depend upon the passage being kept clear. At the one end, it opens upon the springs of life, upon the unseen eternal source of all vitality; at the other end, it opens upon the world of life, with its hunger and thirst, its longing and its need. And the soul lives and prospers when it is actively and fully engaged in bringing the supply to the demand. But sometimes a thing happens in the soul which breaks the connection. A man says, Why should I pass on this life? Why should I not have it for myself, enjoy it myself and make it serve me? So he plants himself squarely in mid-channel and stops the current. And in that act he has passed sentence of death on himself. For that which prevents the outflow of life no less prevents its inflow. You cannot shut others out of your life without shutting yourself in from life. When you do that, you are down and out, for good and all. It is the paradox of egoism—as Jesus said long ago—that it defeats itself. He that seeketh his life shall lose it.

And when the passage is kept open,—a river always tends to deepen and to broaden its bed. And when there is a free flow of life through a man's soul the channel grows larger, fuller, richer, until at last the soul is all channel. And that is life at its highest. The soul becomes a city without walls, an open market that thrives on a free trade in life: where men may buy wine and milk without money and without price. And this is the second paradox: that what you communicate you keep; what you pass on you doubly possess; what you share is more than ever your own. And the more

radio-active you are, the more radio-active you grow.

IV

And here, today, remember two things.[1] *First,* that we come to this table today to clear the channel, to be purged of that insidious egoism that is always threatening and trying to clog up the passage. The final act of this rite is an act of self-dedication; the family board is transformed into an altar on which we offer ourselves. And the other side of that is an act of self-renunciation. There is an entry in Gordon's diary that runs like this: "This morning, hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord"; and we have to do that today, to take by the throat that subtle, selfish egoism that is forever rearing its head in us, and lay it dead before the Lord, to slay the damned thing and to offer to God a free, unencumbered, unobstructed soul.

And second: that this gathering at the table reminds us of the kind of society that we should be, a fellowship of mutually radio-active souls, for ever quickening and enriching life in each other, striking sparks of vitalizing light out of one another. Aye, and all this to the end that we may have a corporate surcharge of life to pass on to the world, a collective radio-activity of life that will vitalize and spiritualize and redeem this our city and our nation. It is a great calling . . . let us not fall short of it.

[1] This sermon was preached before the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

V

THE TIMELESS CROSS

I Cor. 2, 2: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

THE man who wrote these words was going over an old story in his mind. He saw himself again on the road from Athens to Corinth: he remembered with what sense of failure he had set out that day. At Athens, he had had a great opportunity to preach the Gospel; and somehow he had missed it; and on the way to Corinth he searched his mind and heart in order to find out what had gone wrong. The upshot of the matter was that he made up his mind to change his tactics. In Athens, he had tried to turn the flank of the philosophers by answering them according to their philosophy and he had failed. To be sure, he had made a very impressive address upon the Areopagus; but it had missed fire. And so he concluded that the only strategy for him in the future was the frontal attack. Henceforth, he concluded, there's nothing for it but to stick to my text: firstly, the Cross; secondly, the Cross; thirdly, the Cross; the plain Cross, with no adornment of rhetoric and no flourish of philosophy; the Cross, stark, bloody, itself, alone, first, last, and all the time.

Not that he was not going to speak about other things; he was indeed going to speak about everything.

But the approach would be different. At Athens, he had tried to bring the philosophers to the Cross by way of philosophy; henceforth he would arrive at his philosophy by way of the Cross. He would plant the Cross squarely at the heart of life—where it ought to be; and he would bring everything to the test of the Cross. No longer would he say: my Gospel squares with your philosophy; rather would he ask: Does your philosophy square with my Gospel? From now on, he says, the Cross, the whole Cross, and nothing but the Cross, so help me God.

I

Now, I think it would be a mistake to say that we should all turn philosophy out-of-doors in this way. St. Paul had his own task to perform and he had to discover for himself his plan of campaign and stick to it. But if philosophy is the search and the record of the search for the truth of life, and if (as we believe) the Cross is the clew to the truth of life, it is plain that you cannot discard philosophy. For philosophy is at bottom only the business of thinking things out; and that should be done. Else why did God furnish us with the apparatus for thinking? But Paul saw that it was not his particular task to commend the Christian view of the world to men's minds, but to plant the Cross in their hearts. And what that process required was not an argument but a revelation, not rhetorical skill or logical force but the opening of an inward eye, the startling of conscience, the submission of the will. His own office was simply to exhibit the Cross. In one place, he does indeed refer to himself as an advertising man: *You foolish Galatians,* he says, *before whose eyes Jesus was* placarded—that is a fair rendering of

the Greek word. He was Christ's bill-poster; nay, he was even the bill that was posted. *We Apostles,* he says, *are made a spectacle!* He was advertiser and advertisement. His business in life was to be publicity agent for Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

And that is what you and I would be too if the Cross meant as much to us as it did to St. Paul. I am disposed to believe that the resurrection of Christianity, in the soul and in society, hangs upon our willingness to rethink the Cross. We are too habituated to the thought of it; we have grown overfamiliar with it as an idea; it is part of our customary mental environment; we take it for granted; and so we do little fresh and independent thinking about it; least of all do we translate it into the idiom which our modernity requires. Yet, I imagine, few of us can sing thinkingly such lines as these:

> When I survey the wondrous Cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died . . .

or

> There is a green hill far away,
> Without a city wall,
> Where our dear Lord was crucified,
> Who died to save us all. . . .

or

> O Cross that liftest up my head.

without being deeply and strongly moved: and there are moments of unusual sensibility when we become charged with an emotion too deep for words and which can speak only in tears. Yet we should be puzzled to account for the emotion; still more would we be confounded if we tried to state it in words. It is an emotion rather vague, formless, inarticulate; nevertheless, if it is rational, it ought to be statable. To be

sure, there is around it a margin of mystery which will always elude it; we can never lose the sense that there is in it more than the eye can see; and that indeed its final meaning still lies hidden within that mystery. It has overtones and undertones that our undeveloped and unrefined human sensibility cannot register. All this has to do with that indefinable ultrahuman quality in Jesus, which those who lived with Him called His glory, which we identify with Deity, and which the artists symbolize by putting a halo around His head. Concerning these things there is not much that we can profitably say; though a time will no doubt come when we shall be able to explore more of the hidden hinterland of the Cross. I read a little time ago an article in which it was shown how in the course of the years, the trained musical ear had become more and more sensitized so that it had shown itself capable of perceiving ever lessening intervals of sound; and our spiritual hearing may some day be so refined that we shall hear more of the still unheard music of the Cross. Yet, even as we are, there is much that we may hear, if we choose to listen.

II

Now, standing away from it as we do, at a long distance of historical time and circumstance, the point at which we should approach it is the mystery of its timelessness and universality. We may say that it happened at a certain time in a certain place: but that is surely the least thing we say about it. It seems to have happened always and everywhere. . . . Tonight, there are multitudes of people sharing in our worship whose faces we cannot see.[1] North, south, east, west

[1] This sermon was broadcast by radio.

of us, over an area that none can define, they are hearing the Gospel in song and speech. Old folk captive in their rooms by reason of age, sick people in bed, at home and in hospital; lonely folk in remote places; folk spiritually an hungered and athirst, others perhaps only scientifically curious; some perhaps with a burdened conscience and others with a broken heart. Yet science by its increasing miracles has brought all these friends within the circle of our fellowship; through the still air, waves of sound are circling out, bearing to them the Word of God and making those that are afar off nigh. And the Cross was just that, if one may (and one surely may) use the figure. It was a broadcasting of the life and love of God. From Calvary, there were radiated waves of judgment and mercy, of grace and of divine energy, that are still reaching us in far-off lands and across the ages. It speaks to us as it did to the centurion at its foot; and those that were afar off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.

But this timeless and superhistoric quality of the Cross is, I think, connected with a certain completeness that belongs to it. It was not idly that our fathers spoke of it as a finished work. There is that in us which tells us when we face it intelligently that this was something done once for all, something that could not be repeated and to which nothing could be added. There is a certain absolute quality about it, a sort of uncompromising finality. It was the Perfect Man in the Perfect Act. It was the C Major of flesh and blood; it was the ethical high-water mark of human history. It was the supreme moment of a flawless obedience. . . . You know that when you are looking at pictures, you instinctively divide them into two classes,—those that say something to you and those

that don't. Here is one picture; you say, "That is very pretty;" and you pass on. Then you come to another and it holds you. It has touched some hidden spring in your spirit, released some choked fountain of life in you, rekindled some fire of joy in your heart. It makes you more vividly alive than you were before you saw it. There are some substances which science calls "radio-active"; they emanate energy, ceaselessly and spontaneously out of themselves; and that picture we may say is radio-active. It emanates life and it does so because the painter put life into it; he charged it with himself. The one picture was just color arranged cunningly on canvas; the other is a human spirit communicating itself to you. And that great historical act that we call the Cross is just that. It is Jesus in the whole inmost truth of His being gathered up and expressing Himself, completely and wholly, in one supreme deed. And it is in consequence radio-active; so radio-active that it transmits the life it embodied through all the ages to the uttermost ends of the earth. The Cross is still here with us, speaking to us.

III

And the word that it speaks, what is it? In a dim way men have recognized that it was some sort of ultimatum,—an ultimatum in a double sense, that it was the word of a final authority and that it was the final word of that authority over against a particular situation. You may speak of it as an affair of moral philosophy and say it was the reaction of the universe to human wrong. But you cannot stop there. You have to add that it was God's ultimatum to sinners. For,

First of all: it was a declaration of *judgment,* and still is. It classifies men or compels them to classify themselves. It shows sin in its true colors. Recall that moment, if you please; see how around the Cross were gathered the forces that made and still make for death, —vested interests in Church and State, entrenched privilege, ignorance and prejudice, hate and cruelty, self-indulgence and vice and moral indifference,—all the things that encrust and degrade and violate the human spirit. They were all there that day. And over against them the Lamb of God without spot or blemish or any such thing. You cannot mistake the opposition. It is darkness against light, it is black against white; there are no blurred edges: and there is no no-man's-land between. And so it is to this day. The late Dr. Fairbairn once said that Calvary is an epitome of the world. It is, indeed; it is that schism within life itself, that unceasing war between right and wrong, between the forces that make for life and the forces that make for death, focused down to one terrific apocalypse. And this is the word of the Cross to you: Which side are you on? On this or on that? Are you on the side of the Son of Man or of His murderers? Here is an issue on which no soul living can be neutral. And by the answer a man gives, he classifies himself. *This,* indeed, *is the judgment of this world.*

Second: it is a declaration of *mercy.* There is the staggering paradox of God. When we men have passed judgment, our next step is to impose punishment. But God's way is not judgment and punishment but judgment and mercy. Across the gulf that separated Him from His murderers, Jesus threw a bridge of reconciliation, of forgiveness, of restoration:

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And on any view of His person, this is the self-authenticating Word of God. For this does not belong to the natural man. His law is *an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.* It took God in man to show us how to turn the other cheek and to go the second mile. God's punishment is pardon; God's retribution is restoration; forgiveness is the intolerable rod of love. And still it comes, this word of mercy, to you and me,—and it never fades as it comes across the ages,—to us who in our carelessness and ignorance and indifference are forever being drawn in thought and deed to the wrong side of the critical line. We have in our modern jargon of publicity developed a peculiar use of the word "selling"; and I have heard the expression "selling the Church", or "selling the Gospel", by which we mean commending the Church and the Gospel to the world. There is nothing very new about this: it is already in the Scriptures. They speak of a market in which we may buy wine and milk without money and without price. And who is this strange and eccentric merchantman who offers his wares thus quixotically—who other than God, who is still offering, still selling His wine of mercy and His milk of grace, without money and without price? God is still at the old stand on Calvary "selling" His love: and it is all we need. Will you not come into the market and buy?

And if these two words of judgment and mercy have reached you and you have heard "effectually" as the old theologians might have said,—they were fond of the word "effectual"—then the receiving set in your soul will recognize a third word. This third word is a "claim of right." You discover that you are no longer your own, that you have been mysteriously "bought;"

and by a strange paradox you have been bought into freedom and into bondage. No longer a slave; and yet still a slave; nevertheless, now a willing and joyful slave. The Cross claims from you a very considerable thing; but you know that it has a right to all it asks. It asks that we plant it firmly at the heart of our life and that we shall live in the shadow of it; it asks that it shall be the principle by which we shall determine how we shall live and what we shall live for; that we shall make *it* the touchstone of our motives and purposes, our desires and our deeds; it requires of us that we shall discard from life all things that cannot bear its light, that we shall admit into our lives nothing of which we shall be ashamed when we see it under the undying and pitiless searchlight of its righteousness. Some one has said that the Cross is the ground-plan of the universe; it asks no less to be made the ground-plan of the life of every one of us.

Which is another way of saying that we shall be, each one of us, a relaying station in the plan by which the good news of God is to be made available for all men; that the Cross shall become radio-active in our lives so that when our lives touch other men they may become aware of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that virtue of life has been passed into them from us; that we may one and all become broadcasting stations, dependent on Calvary and auxiliary to it, and take our place in the vast broadcasting design of God.

Men and women, what are you going to do about it? I am tempted to put you to the test. Some of you have long heard the word of judgment and mercy and have made your submission to this claim of right. But the rest of us? I know that there are many here on the brink of the great decisive surrender. With my

mind's eye, I have seen myself asking you to register and avow your surrender here and now: and I have seen men and women in the springtide of life rise up here and there in this church, a noble company declaring itself to be for the Cross of Christ, taking it for their own in all it gives and in all it asks. With my mind's eye, I say, I have seen all this; but was it only a mere day-dream, and nothing in it? Young men and women, who are halting between two minds, who are standing on the threshold, I dare to bid you to come in! You hesitating on the brink, I dare to bid you to cross the line.

VI

ESOTERIC CHRISTIANITY

I Cor. 2, 7: "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery."

THE other day there fell into my hands a book called "Esoteric Christianity," and some of you may guess from the title that it had come from the busy pen of Mrs. Annie Besant. Its aim was to expound theosophy. Now the word "esoteric" means, roughly, something secret, hidden; and what is implied in the title is that there are two planes of Christianity. The first is the common Christianity of common folk; and the second is the secret knowledge that lies behind this common, popular Christianity, the concealed core which is hidden from the babes and is revealed only to the wise and prudent. And Mrs. Besant makes no bones about it; she says that we are divided into two classes: the vulgar who can only take in the shell of Christianity, and the more subtle and refined intelligences that can apprehend its occult content. It is the principle of aristocracy introduced into the sphere of the personal religious life.

I

But this is an old story,—it is not Mrs. Besant's invention. It goes—in idea—very far back; and even within the sphere of Christianity it is not new, by any

means. You even see traces of its coming in the New Testament. At the time the Epistle to the Colossians was written, the thing in the form of Gnosticism had already begun to make itself felt. But outside the Christian circle, it was, in St. Paul's time, the rage, as we should say, in the countries in which he traveled. There was an epidemic of what we have come to call "mystery-religions"; these religions had traveled into the West from Egypt and the East and were associated with such deities as Mithra, Osiris, Isis, and Serapis. But the central idea in them all was that the cultus in every case was secret and only known to the initiated. They had elaborate ceremonies of initiation,—washings, bathings, baptisms; they had sacramental meals,—they spoke, for instance, of "the table of our Lord Serapis." But their life lay in their specific mysteries, admission into which was the monopoly of the elect.

Now it would be idle to pretend that these mystery-religions did not color the mind of the early Christian society. The infant churches of the Mediterranean seaboard were living side by side with them; and it was inevitable that they should make comparisons and contrasts. Historically, these mystery-religions have to be regarded in two ways,—as a crop of sectarian cults that appeared, as such a crop will always appear, with the breakdown and exhaustion of a great religious tradition; just as today we are seeing a wild mushroom growth of "fancy religions," of cults and little sectarian cliques due to the present exhaustion of the Protestant tradition. Greek religion had run to seed; and the result was the spread of mystery-religions. But—and this is the second point to be noticed—they were the expression of a genuine and undying religious impulse.

The religious tradition might run to seed; but the religious impulse would not die. And so, unguided, it ran wild. There was no doubt as to its vitality and its strength. And so the early Christians could not escape from it; they had to take account of it, to compare and to contrast themselves with it.

There were points of similarity. There was the baptismal office which the cults and the church alike practiced, the symbol of regeneration, the rite of initiation into a new life, and into the inward mystery. There were also sacramental meals, a Lord's Table, in all alike. And it is held by some scholars that some of our familiar Christian terminology was taken over from the mystery-religions. The very expression "The Lord's Table" may have come in that way; the name was a good one, and the Christians took it and read their own content into it. But the most familiar of all these terms that the Christians appropriated was the word "mystery," and in their use of it revealed the one profound and fundamental contrast between the faith of the Gospel and the religion of the cults. And it was this:

In the cults, the mystery remained a mystery; in the Gospel, it had become an open secret. In the former, the mystery was the monopoly of the initiated; in the latter it was public property. In the former, it was jealously guarded in the temple; in the latter it was proclaimed from the housetops. The cult met with closed doors; the Church had its doors open to the world. The cult lived to guard its secret; the Church lived to let everybody into it. St. Paul's Christianity was the Gospel of the OPEN SECRET. The cults had something to hide; the Church had

something to disclose; and that made all the difference in the world.

II

It is among the first principles of the Gospel that it recognizes no aristocracy, no natural privilege, no monopoly in the deep things of God. Whosoever will may come. That is why the essential genius of the Gospel has made war upon all priestcraft; and why, after the Middle Ages, the Reformation was inevitable. And because the essentially Christian soul can recognize no privileged middlemen in its transactions with God, it has been the mightiest lever for the overthrow of despotism, exclusive privilege, and monopoly in other relations of life. The Gospel has—it was in its nature so to do—to stand for the open door, the equal opportunity, the integrity and the inviolability of the human spirit. And its logic carries you at last to the doctrine of the unpartitioned Church and the dream of an unfrontiered world. Its very call is an ultimatum to all party walls; its final goal is an enfranchised universe.

And it is part of this philosophy that there is not in the Gospel itself any region inaccessible to the ordinary man, no secret beyond the reach of any man. There is in it no holiest of all which is forbidden ground to the multitude. There is no such thing as a locked door in any part of its edifice; no occultism, nothing esoteric, no mystery. It lays all the wares it has to offer for public sale in the light of day. Nor indeed does it merely keep open shop, and wait for customers to come and buy. It goes afield, and makes a market of the whole earth. Its merchandise—priceless in a double sense, that it is beyond price and

that it has no price—is urged upon a needy race without respect of color or of capacity. It is the one truly universal thing in this sect-ridden and race-torn earth. It is and cannot help being missionary and propagandist; it wants every man to share its open secret.

III

And yet it is not every man who can,—and here's your paradox. There is a large class of men who cannot enter into it: *the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God,* says St. Paul; *he cannot know them.* Mrs. Besant, it would appear, is right after all; there is an aristocratic principle; there is exclusion: there is privilege; and it is bad news for the ordinary man. That is a religion for the elect, you will answer me, in spite of all you have said. The natural man—St. Paul is quite explicit—could not know this secret; and are we not all natural men, all just the same common clay? All this is indeed quite true, so true that this natural man's inability to know the great secret was responsible for the supreme tragedy of history,—*for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory;* and we may surmise that it has been the cause of many a tragedy besides.

But you have your answer pat from this same Paul. "If the natural man cannot know this secret, it is his own fault that he remains a natural man. He need not continue to be a natural man; he can become a supernatural man. Not only is the door of the holiest wide open, but the gate of the outer court is open too; and if a man chooses to stay outside in the cold and the dark, well then, he has only himself to blame

for it. If he is shut out of this knowledge, it is because he shuts himself out. If he does not enter into the secret, it is because he chooses not to enter. He is lying in the bed he has made for himself, and nobody can change that except himself." And this is the strange and marvelous thing about the Gospel; it says to me: Come; here is the great ultimate secret; don't you want to know it? And the moment a man *wants* to know it, he has begun to know it. Here, says the Gospel, is the hidden light of life, don't you want to see it? And to want to see it is to begin to see it; and that is true of every man. There is exclusion, but it is self-exclusion; there is privilege, but it is denied to no man; there is an esoteric Christianity, but it requires no faculty to become familiar with it that every living soul does not possess. And if one man sees more than another, it is only that he looks more intently.

IV

If they had known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They did not know what they were doing, as Jesus said. They did not see; they did not understand. I have said here before, and it is worth insisting upon, that Christianity is not primarily believing anything or doing anything but seeing something. In his conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus is reported as laying down the principle definitely. Everything begins with *seeing* the Kingdom of God. And you will recall how persistent in the Fourth Gospel is the stress upon sight and light. In the course of one of these exceedingly futile religious discussions that lap over into the daily press, a correspondent the other day rightly expressed some im-

patience with a technical and academic handling of a desiccated theology in the pulpit; but went on to insist that the business of the pulpit was to urge men and to stimulate them to higher ethical behavior, to enforce (what was indicated in the specific points which the writer urged) our prevailing code of gentlemanly and sportsmanlike conduct. Now, we need all we can get of encouragement to live up to our existing moral light: and no doubt the pulpit has some responsibility in the matter. But that is not and never can be the primary task of religion. It is not to improve men; to make them behave better; it is not even the reformation of character; it is to *reveal* something; and the fundamental and characteristic Christian experience is that a man sees the thing revealed: and when it comes to a man, it is like the spark that passes between the two poles of an electric battery. "Whereas I was once blind," he says, "I now see."

Mr. Hogg of Madras in his valuable little book, "Christ's Message of the Kingdom," distinguishes between people who are salted and people who are salt, the folk who are Christianized and the folk who are Christian. The former are the people who have been improved by Christianity; the latter are the people who have been transfigured by it. On the one hand, you have men and women who are living on the secular plane, but whose selfishness has been modified, whose passions have been tamed, whose good nature has been stimulated by Christian influence, people whose bearing does more or less conform to what I have called our prevailing code of gentlemanly and sportsmanlike conduct: they are good, decent, law-abiding, respectable citizens who always give you a

square deal and will always help a lame dog over a stile. But on the other hand, there are folk, and of these there are fewer, who have passed through a transforming experience, and who have a specific and unique quality of bearing and character, who are careful about some things that we are not interested in; and careless about things that matter to us. You will find them everywhere, in business and in the professions, and there is no mistaking them. When we speak of them, we are aware of a certain respectfulness of tone in our speech that is not there when we speak of other men; and we speak of them as "saints." There is, even in the stress of business, a certain apartness, a certain detachment, a certain unworldliness about them which sets them in a class of their own; and we have the impression that the main business of their life is transacted in some other sphere out of sight. They are seeing something that the rest of us do not see; they are living in some realities to which we are strangers. And these are the people who have passed beyond the stage of being Christianized to that of being actually and vitally Christian, the people whom St. Paul calls spiritual.

V

Ah, you will say, is not that what you call mysticism? And all of us cannot be mystics. In a sense, the specific Christian experience is indeed mystical, mystical in the sense that it happens inside of you, out of sight. And what it comes to is this: I think that we have been wrong in insisting that the first reaction of the Gospel is to give the individual a new nature; what it does is to give him a change of nature by first giving him a change of world. Perhaps in

the end these two things are the same thing. We speak as though the sequences of time and space are operative in this sphere: and probably they are not. But what happens is that a man sees the Kingdom of God—a divine order of life, a world of values and ends, a universe of life and behavior in which the customary motives and aims of the secular order seem wholly irrelevant; a world which at once authenticates itself to what he knows is best and truest in him: and he says, "That is it; that is reality; I have found it." There is the Way: the Truth: the Life; and to that he belongs forevermore. He may deny the things he has seen: but then his life becomes a continuous tragedy: he may reject the vision after he has seen it; but every day he knows his life is miscarrying. But if he lives in this world he has seen, he becomes aware of changing attitudes within himself. Money, for instance, becomes a different thing to him. It ceases to be a merely material or temporal thing that buys temporal and material things. He sees it as a symbol of value, and value is something compounded of two things: the gifts of God and the toil of man; it becomes to him a holy thing; it is minted life, and should be a vehicle of life. He values it for its spiritual uses. He values his business for its spiritual opportunities; he values his home for its spiritual discipline; he values the world for its sacramental meaning. *All things,* says St. Paul, *are become new* to him.

And if the rulers of this world had seen this other world, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. They would have known what He was, would have divined His secret. They would have seen His glory—that invisible halo that encircled His head. To

them He was but a disturber of the peace, a troublesome fanatic; at the best, a well-meaning but mistaken dreamer whom it was best to put out of the way. The common people thought He was a prophet; Nicodemus conceded Him to be a teacher sent from God. But they all missed the rest,—that ultrahuman quality in which his real meaning lay. There is that in him which eye cannot see and no rational or critical analysis can disclose, a margin of mystery that is not penetrable by sense or natural faculty. And we, like all these others, will be outsiders from him, separated from his loving heart by that same veil of mystery until we have the inner eye opened which can pierce it, until we have the mind of Christ to which this opaqueness becomes transparent.

VII

THE PREACHER TO HIMSELF

I Cor. 3, 6: "I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

None of you (I imagine) has ever heard a preacher preaching to himself; but you are going to hear it this morning. Of course, no sermon is worth preaching or indeed should ever be preached which the preacher has not first preached to himself. But this text is specially a text for a sermon to preachers; even more, it is a text from which every preacher should preach a sermon to himself at least once a year. Naturally, it would not be possible to reproduce in public the whole sermon that an honest preacher would preach to himself; there are some matters of so deep an intimacy that no ears but his own and God's should hear them. Nevertheless, lest any of you suppose that you are going to "listen in" on a soliloquy, I hasten to remind you that though there is an inveterate lay tendency to treat the preacher as a breed or class—even jocularly sometimes as a sex—apart, the preacher is made of the same stuff as the rest of you; and I would also recall to your minds what St. Paul said to the Ephesians: first, *unto each one of us is the grace given,*—this grace of the Christian ministry. It is not the monopoly of a professional class; it is the responsibility of every professed Christian. And second, he insists

that the whole business of the special ministry is to diffuse its privilege; it exists in order *to perfect the saints in the work of ministering.* We Protestants believe in the priesthood of all believers; and it is the mark of the true prophet that he has no more frequent or passionate prayer than this: *Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!* I pray to God that I may be a true priest and a true prophet. But I am neither priest nor prophet in any sense in which you men and women are not also and equally priests and prophets. The ministry which I exercise is in no whit different in substance from the ministry which belongs to you all as Christians. It is different only in its form: and that is in the end a very little thing, though, like some other little things, it may become a very dangerous thing.

I

Now, I would observe first of all, that the doctrine which St. Paul propounds here is not one which the natural man in the preacher takes kindly to; and I assure you with great sincerity that there is a very great deal of the natural man in the preacher I know best. *So then,* says St. Paul, *neither is he that soweth anything, neither he that watereth* . . . "But, my dear sir, you really don't expect me to agree to that. I have been to the university; I have had a theological training; I have a sort of reputation as a preacher; I am the minister of a very important church; I am called here and there to render important services. And yet you tell me I am of no account at all. That is surely that form of speech that is called 'hyperbole,' the speech of poetic or pulpit excess."

"No," says the old man, and his face is seamed by long toil and anxiety, his body wasted by pain and hardship; "No, it is no hyperbole; it is stark naked realism. And when you have been at this business of preaching and building churches as long as I have, you too will know that it is the bare net truth. That is, of course, if you do not let your heart deceive you. You may pride yourself on having done this thing or that; and it may look fine and splendid in your eyes, you may plume yourself on your popularity as a preacher, your success in the ministry; you may point out with satisfaction in what great demand your services are; but the very fact that you can look at yourself in this way means that God was not in your achievement; and it is less and worse than nothing. It may even be the damnation of your soul; and you have been nothing but a presumptuous fool. No, my middle-aged friend, I am an old man now; and I have seen a good deal of life; I have preached the Gospel all the way from Jerusalem to Greece; and I know that I was nothing and that Apollos was nothing and that you are nothing,—without God. Your preaching is so much blank practice; your labor cancels out; the thing you do misses fire,—without God. You have no significance apart from God. It is God that gives you all the meaning you have."

That is bitter medicine for my vanity to swallow; but it is, all the same, good physic for you no less than for me. You think you are something, as I do, a person of real importance. But, good friend, look yourself in the face; and unless your vanity has destroyed your sense of humor, I warrant you will smile. Swelled head; nose up in the air; chest all out in front of you; several cubits added to your stature;—what

a sight for the gods! And all the time, you are but a dingy clot of clay, like me. O men and women, let us try to assess ourselves by some surer measure than the distorted scale of our self-complacency! For when your tale is told, what will there be to show for it? What moral will your children draw from your story? Do you think you have any significance today that will outlive you? Will men say of you when you are gone: *He being dead yet speaketh?* Or will you pass as "a sun-start on a stream"? And when you stand at last in the Presence, will you have anything in your hand that will bear looking at in that light? Nay, write it down, deep in your heart this day: I am nothing—without God; the thing I do is less than nothing—without God. And I have no significance either in time or in eternity except as I live and think and work—with God: and the most blessed meaning that any of us may ever have is that, whether we live or whether we die, we are God's journeymen.

That is the first head of the sermon: and the hardest; and it will take much praying to bring us to it, to enable us to achieve this nihility, this nothingness. But there are other heads; two of them have to do with the Church; and these are for you no less than for me.

II

Of these the first is: let me remember that the Church is a living thing. It is something that was planted; something that needs watering; something that should bear fruit; and from this, you may draw as many morals as you like. But the moral that I want to draw today is that, like every living thing, it is a sensitive thing, a delicate thing, a thing that

wants tending, that needs to be treated very tenderly and gently. It is wonderful how much it can stand, and has stood,—storms of human pride have shaken it to its very roots; tempests of harsh, opinionative intolerance have wrenched some of its branches from the trunk; lightnings of moral catastrophe have seamed and scarred it; blight after blight of apathy have made its leaves wilt and thinned its crop of fruit. But life is a very tenacious thing,—thanks be to the God who made it so! All the same, it can be destroyed. For there are such things as poison and starvation and neglect; and it is for us to see that it suffers from none of these things; most of all that our hands do not carry the poison or are not oversparing of provender and care. And God knows how it needs our care, today. It is not as healthy and thriving a tree as it should be; and some folk outside are pointing at it the finger of scorn; and some of us within are very busy with our criticism of it. I have done my own share of it; but it is a mean and low business, at bottom,—like a man criticizing his mother. For the Church is our mother; she bore us in Christ; she suckled us at her breasts; she dandled us on her knees; and now she has put herself in our care. I remember a friend of mine telling of an errand boy in a London street carrying a heavy basket; the boy was whistling as he went; but presently he stopped and put the basket down on the pavement. "'Arf time!" said he, "chinge over!" And he picked his basket up with the other hand and went whistling along. My friends, let us call half time—and "change over"; let us be done with finding fault; let us see what a little more love will do.

Aye and remember this, besides; that today the

Church which is our mother lies mangled on the face of the earth; torn limb from limb—a spectacle to make angels weep; and to make you and me weep tears of intolerable bitterness and shame, if we had but the eyes to see it. I tell you that as a minister of Christ, I should be guilty of the grossest default, if I did not long and labor the best I know how for the healing of my mutilated mother, the violated Bride of Christ; and shame has eaten up my bowels as I have watched men obtrude their prejudices, their private taste, their love of a name, and obstruct a great enterprise for restoring here in our midst, some gleam of the lost comeliness of "the Lily of the King." And as you stand before her Husband on His throne, her gaping wounds will cry out against you, if your hands and lips have done or said aught that kept them open or have been indifferent and laggard in the blessed task of healing them.

III

Now for another head: let me remember that the Church is a catholic thing. There is room for Paul to do his work in it; there is room also for Apollos; and there is room no less for you and me. The good Lord in His wise kindness made us all different; for life would be unbearable if we were all alike. He gave us all sorts of temperaments and capacities; of tasks and inclinations; and He did this in order that we might make each other's lives rich and beautiful and abounding. And you are no good to me and I am no good to you unless you and I alike are cherishing and nourishing the individuality that God has given to us. But I warn you against trying to impose your individuality on me; it would be mere waste of

time, anyhow; and God forbid that I should be such a fool as to try to impose my individuality on you. That is not what the Church is for. The fundamental idea of the catholic Church is that it is a society of all sorts and conditions of people who live to give themselves to each other; a society in which people tolerate each other's prejudices and foibles and idiosyncrasies in the wide, many-colored love of Christ. The Church of Christ is not a school of uniformitarianism; and the sort of Church I want to see is a fellowship in which every manner of Christian soul can worship and be at home. Some people don't like this word catholic; it sends a shiver through them; and the shades of their Orange forefathers rise up before them; or their Covenanter blood becomes hot in them, when they hear it. Well, I have my blood too. I might say with St. Paul,—if any man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I more. Have I not Orange blood in my veins? Aye, and a Huguenot strain as well. And all this mixed into thick, dark Welsh Calvinistic blood. And, strange to say, I am not at all ashamed of the mixture; though I should not think I was justified in putting the blame for my prejudices on my ancestors. I suspect that they have enough to answer for without having my frailties laid to their account. And there are people whose gorge rises when they hear or say the word "Anglican;" well, I had an old grandmother whose goods were taken and sold because she would not pay tithes to the Anglican Church at a time when she was seeing my father through college to become a Presbyterian minister; and some of us Welsh folk sucked in some hard, bitter feelings about the Anglican Church with our mothers' milk. But I want, for the love of Christ, to bury and

to forget these "far off unhappy things and battles long ago"; I long to see a Church in which all the lovers of Christ can worship Him together, where St. Francis and Thomas à Kempis, Father Damien and John Henry Newman, might not feel themselves among strangers, where Bishop Ken and Lancelot Andrews and William Law and Frederick Maurice might come and feel at home; and where John Wesley could preach a Gospel sermon and his brother Charles lead us in singing, "Jesus, Lover of my soul." Well, that is the catholic Church; and you had better get used to the thought of it; for you will have to put up with it in heaven. The word "catholic" is not a label but a descriptive adjective, meaning "free for all," "open to everybody," "whosoever will may come." It means the open door, the unfenced communion table, and all sorts of ministries and services and graces according to the measure of the gift of God. And that is the sort of Church we should be wanting to build up in this place. May God make me and keep me ashamed to be a minister, and may He make and keep you ashamed to be members, of a mere sect!

IV

Well, we have had three important and provoking heads so far: Let me remember that I am nothing; let me remember that the Church is a living thing; let me remember that it is a catholic thing; and now for a fourth and last and greatest: Let me remember God who gives the increase,—the God who is my life and your life and the life of the living catholic Church; the God without whom I am but a mouthing jack-in-the-box, and you are only wood and hay and stubble, and the Church is a sepulcher, the repose of dead men.

Yes, let us remember God,—whom, alas, we so easily forget. For we are so full of ourselves, so set up in our good conceit of ourselves, that He is crowded out of our memory; and you cannot long crowd Him out of memory without crowding Him out of your life. And remember that there are no substitutes for God. In these latter days we have tended to substitute fuss for faith, to think that busyness is the first article of holiness; to put our trust in organization and plant and method. Now, I do believe in hard work; I believe also in scientific farming, in the most modern agricultural devices for sowing and planting and irrigation in the Lord's cornfields. But it will be a poor harvest if we try to do without His sunshine and the good growing weather of His presence. Let us remember God who gives the increase . . .

And, at this Communion Table, let us remember what manner of God He is and how He gives the increase. Our God is the Crucified. The grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, and He must die again in your heart if you are to live. *I have been crucified with Christ,* says St. Paul. I said a week or two ago that you must needs go to Bethlehem in your own heart; and no less must you pass by Calvary. You must indeed have a crib in your heart; but no less a Cross. And now our figures become confused. For it seems that you must go through the Nativity and the Resurrection at the same time; and the Manger is transformed into the Empty Grave, and the Holy Child dissolves into the Risen Lord who goes before you into Galilee, that country of the mind in which your true love and your true life are waiting for you. It is a little bewildering. Oh, but your heart understands! And it knows that it must die to itself if it

is to live in the Beloved. It must go through a little death in the divine image, if it is to live in the Everlasting. Your heart and most of all, mine; and perhaps today as we come to the table, we may have a taste of this miracle; and in very deed we shall, if only we are willing to lay ourselves dead, at the feet of the God who is forever dying that He may make dead men alive. Yes, just now, let me remember the Crucified.

That is the preacher's sermon to himself. And the application of it? Well, chiefly this: this new year, will you pray for this poor preacher with his deplorably dry heart, . . . and pray that he may be able continually to pray some such prayer as this, thinking of you:—

Let them not suffer any loss
For sin of mine; of every cross
Thou layest on them, let them bear
Only the lighter share.

If they have sinned, yet lay Thy hand
On me who at Thine altar stand;
Ah Thou, who tendest this poor vine,
Tread out the grapes; and all the wine
Be theirs—and Thine!

VIII

JERRY-BUILDING THE TEMPLE

I Cor. 3, 10: "Let each man take care how he buildeth . . ."

HAVE you ever observed in how many and how various connections we make a figurative use of the word "build?" We speak of building a nation, of building the state, of building character. In sport, we may speak of a man building up a good score; a newspaper owner may build up a good circulation; a business man may build up a wide connection. A doctor builds a practice; a politician builds a reputation; and so on. It is not a mere accident that the most ancient and widespread of fraternities is that of the Freemasons, who speak of God as the Architect of the Universe and are supposed to conceive of themselves as his journeymen. Most of us can look back to days when we spent hours of delight with a box of bricks building churches and bridges and other miracles of construction. The instinct of construction is deep-laid within us: we feel it to be an original and distinguishing mark of an authentic manhood. It was Ruskin, I think, who divided mankind into builders and destroyers. I am not sure that this classification is complete. There is another class, the jerry-builders, unless indeed you include them, as you well may, in the class of destroyers.

Here St. Paul is uttering a warning against this

very thing, jerry-building; and indeed the most criminal jerry-building of all, jerry-building the Temple of God. The foundation, he says, has been well and truly laid; see that your masonry is worthy of the foundation. But he was sorely afraid that these Corinthians were jerry-building their part of the ultimate Temple of God. The builders of Rome were said to have built for eternity; and if you are going to build at all, that is the only kind of building worth putting your hands to, building that will stand the test of time and use. St. Paul saw that in their factiousness his Corinthian friends were putting a good deal of shoddy into the walls, *wood, hay and stubble,* perishable and corruptible things. For when there is faction afoot, a good many noisome things are in the air; there is pride and intrigue and wire-pulling and petty politics; there is bitterness and rancor and bad blood; and with such things you can build but a trumpery and flimsy house that collapses at the touch of storm or fire. To build for eternity is to build with sound, hall-marked material,—gold, silver, precious stones, materials not only sound but comely, capable of being built together into a house of beauty no less than a house of strength. For this House of God is not for your use only but for your love, not for a human end but for the glory of God. I speak now (do I need to say?) of a house not made with hands, the house that William Blake saw in his dreams:—

A building of Pity and Compassion;
Its stones are Pity and the bricks well-wrought Affections,
Enameled with Love and Kindness; and the tiles, engraven gold,
Labor of merciful hands; the beams and rafters are Forgiveness,
The mortar and cement tears of Honesty, the nails

And the screws and the iron braces are well-wrought Blandishments,
And well contrived words, firm-fixing never forgotten,
Always comforting the remembrance; the floors Humility,
The ceilings Devotion, the hearths Thanksgiving.

With such priceless materials as these only shall we build a house of life, at once the sanctuary of souls and the Temple of God, that will be of a piece with its foundation. And I imagine that if one could have shown Blake's picture of the House of God to St. Paul, he would have said: "Yes, that is the Temple of my dreams also; that Holy Temple that in the silence of the night-time, I see growing unto the Lord."

I

And this dream of a house of life in which every man might live and find himself at home, and every part of his life might find its fitting place and provender, what has become of it? How has it fared? It is not a story creditable to mankind. For a century or two, it seemed to find a growing body; and then it became pale, anemic, without strength. In the desolation of the world at the beginning of the fifth century, Augustine dreamed the dream over again; but five and more centuries had yet to pass before the dream once more caught the imagination of mankind, and men set about making it come true. The story of that age is recorded in its stones, in great monuments of architecture which it left behind it to tell its tale. The peculiar saints of that age were its builders; and those great and beautiful achievements they left behind them were meant and made to symbolize the unity of life in God.

Some of you, no doubt, have seen the amazing

miracle of Mont Saint-Michel; and you have read the story of how, tier upon tier, the foundation was laid and raised, clinging to the steep face of the rock, until the builders had made a platform around the summit on which they raised the noble and comely Abbey Church, translating into the solidity of stone their dream of that ascending House of God not made with hands. Power and strength, courage and beauty and aspiration were there; and with all these the catholicity, the comprehensiveness of the City of God. "It expressed," says Henry Adams, "the unity of Church and State, God and Man, Peace and War, Life and Death, Good and Bad. It solved the whole problem of the universe; the priest and the soldier were both at home here; the politician was not outside of it; the sinner was made welcome; the poet was made happy in his own spirit with a sympathy, an affection that suggests a habit of verse in the abbot as well as in the architect. God reconciles all; the world is an obvious sacred harmony." A little overdone, perhaps, yet essentially true. And in those days, they did feel like that about it; they had recaptured the first fine Pauline rapture. But once more the dream was broken. Pride reared its ugly and fatal head; while yet the house was abuilding, it was divided against itself, and it broke up in a wild and long riot of divisiveness and sectarianism. And that single House of God and Home of Man has become a grotesque miscellany of little huts and little shanties all fenced in securely, and each proudly sporting the badge of its shame: "No connection with the shop next door!" Oh, the comedy and tragedy of it—as heaven sees it. It is high time—and here in Canada, this is the hour—to take away this reproach: and as the Lord liveth, let us begin, with

a right good will, to do it. Our opportunity, in our day and generation, is at our door.

II

But let us look closer at one point of this story. "Gothic Art," says Dr. Ralph Adams Cram, "had three controlling forces working toward an unattainable perfection: structural integrity, irradiated by consummate invention and an almost divine creative genius: passion for that exalted beauty that is eternal and unchangeable, expressed through new forms, at once northern and Catholic, the just balance and intimate interplay of these two impulses." Then he goes on to show how the balance and the interplay might be overthrown by the temptation to carry either of the two first forces to excess. "At Reims," he continues, "the balance remains true and firm; at Amiens, we see the first fatal steps in the development of a purely human (and notably French) logic, toward that intellectual pride, that almost arrogance of self-confidence that found its nemesis in the unstable marvel of Beauvais." Later he tells how this deadly pride that had insinuated itself into the building of Beauvais met with one fall after another, until at last Beauvais became and "remains a vast fragment and a living commentary on the excesses and penalties of that pride of life that succeeded the spiritual humility of the Middle Ages." They had built less for the glory of God than for the vainglory of man, and the pitiless judgment of time showed that even mighty stone and mortar reared in pride cannot stand. When man thrusts himself before God, he brings the house he built down in ruin about his head; for than this there is nothing truer

in life: *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.* And if this is true of a temple of stone, how much more true of that invisible Temple to the building of which, with God, we are bidden, nay, which in promise and prospect, even now we actually *are. Know ye not that ye,*—you company of people in Corinth,—*are a Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the Temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the Temple of God is holy, and such are ye!*

III

I pray you to pay attention to this: *Such are ye;* or as the old Version is, *Which Temple ye are.* It is ourselves that we are to build into this holy masonry. We are both the journeymen and the building materials. Dr. Cram speaks of the structural integrity of Gothic Art. *Structural integrity;* write those words, I beseech you, on your hearts, you builders of the Temple! Other things there are which we want in our business of building. We want resourcefulness; we want faith and daring; we want a feeling for beauty. But before all else, structural integrity,—sound material and incorruptible workmanship. I am not going to press too hard upon the question of how jealous, how careful you are of the structural integrity of this unseen House of God. I dare not ask it; for it is a question that makes me unhappier than it can possibly make you. But there it is, *structural integrity*, the first principle of our building, of what we are trying to do here in this place. Oh, indeed, *let a man take heed how he buildeth.* For believe me, there is no undertaking in time or in eternity in which shoddy stuff and

conscienceless work will be so surely shown up. So, let a man take heed! What kind of a *man* is it that you are professing or trying to build into this holy masonry? In other words, what kind of man *are* you? Do you think—it is an unpleasant thought but it is as well to face it—do you think that you may possibly be in the eyes of the Master of all good workmen a man of wood or a man of straw? Let me ask myself quite plainly whether my own soul has a structural integrity that I dare to propose to build it into these living walls? Am I sound right through,—without shoddy or sham in any part of me? Are you? Nay, but I know that my substance is adulterated with pride, cankered with envy and uncharitableness, stained by disobedience and willfulness, corrupt with hidden treasons and concealed disloyalties. Structural integrity,—no, it is not here; God help me—and you! And yet, it is with us that these august walls are to be built. You probably know that the word "sincere" comes from two Latin words meaning "without wax," —the allusion being to the practice of filling up cracks and blemishes in statuary with wax. It is only the sincere soul, the soul without wax, the soul without counterfeit, that can find a place in God's building; not the whited sepulcher of a soul that most of us try to show to the world. And there would be little hope for us were there not one who can make us *sincere and void of offense*, and can *present us without blemish before His presence with exceeding joy*. Without counterfeit, without blemish,—there is comfort and hope in that. At my best, I am poor soiled stuff; but there is a divine alchemy that can transmute my stubble into fine gold; and there is a Master Mason who can shape me to His uses, and give me some little place that

fits me in the fabric of the House that He is building.

IV

And what more shall I say? Shall I speak of the resourcefulness we need? Or of the courage it requires? Or of the feeling for beauty without which we cannot build worthily? There is much we might profitably say about these things. But the secret of them all lies in that old word that I have already quoted: *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it,*—the first word and the last for Churchmen and Statesmen and all who have building operations of any kind on hand. It holds for the building of churches and the building of a nation and the building of a business. If God is not in the building, it is only jerry-building: and its end is laid with its beginning. The secret of the durability and the beauty of those old monuments of which I have spoken was that they were monuments to God, not to the skill or virtue or craftsmanship of man. They were built first and last for the glory of God: and when that was forgotten, jerry-building began. And it is so in every part of life. You are trying to build a character—but what for? Because a good character is a sound asset, because a good name is a fine investment. O drop it, friend. You will never do it. No character was ever built in any man that could stand the racket of time and experience, that was not built for God, and God was not in the building of it. We speak of building a nation, here in Canada. But what sort? And what for? I see in the public discussions of the Canadian future no glimmer of any outlook beyond economic greatness and political importance. God help Canada,

if there is no more in this vast experiment than that! Does it ever occur to us to dedicate Canada, today and tomorrow, to God, who alone can give us to build a nation with the fine gold of noble character, the sterling silver of honest work, the precious stones of beauty, truth and love. We are filling the air with loud lamentation about taxes and tariffs and immigration; and there is a fiddling little political game afoot which even the man in the street treats with contempt, and which is holding up the main traffic of life. Before the war we were told that the "great illusion" was that war could ever any more be profitable to the victor; and today we have tragic enough reason to know that so it is. But we have another illusion to be rid of, the illusion that party politics, "the patched-up broils of Congress," as Lowell called them, are indispensable to a nation. But did you never read in the Scriptures: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things*—the solution of your economic problems, problems of food and drink and clothing,—*shall be added unto you?* O leave to their game the small people who like it! Yours is a vaster errand. Be a man of prayer; for Canada needs your prayer more than it does any man's politics. Go you out among this people with God in your heart and God in your understanding; and so think, and so speak when the word is given to you. With God, too, in your daily work, giving to it strength and grace that all men may see; be you God's man among your brethren . . . So far as in you lies, take heed that God dwells with this people,—even though your own heart be His only dwelling place. And you will have built into the life of Canada something, however small, that can never perish. . . .

IX

ALL THINGS ARE YOURS

I Cor. 3, 21-23: "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

LET us think about the incredible but unclaimed wealth of the Christian soul. Now and again you will see in the English daily papers advertisements about unclaimed fortunes in the Court of Chancery. How they come to be there, I am not sure. I suppose that they are estates of men who died intestate or whose heirs cannot be found. Anyhow, there they are; and there are persons who make a business of searching the records of the Court and who from time to time publish the surnames of the people who seem entitled to make a claim to some of this sleeping wealth. I have heard stories of people who made good their claim and inherited great riches. But it is a cumbrous and costly business; the dangerous intricacies of the Court of Chancery are a byword. This particular road to fortune is hedged about and cluttered up with every sort of difficulty; and I have heard of other folk who were compelled to live in poverty because they lacked the means to extricate a legitimate competency out of Chancery. . . .

And here are we Christian folk, heirs of a wealth wholly inexhaustible, by the side of which gold and

silver are small change; easily accessible, to which there is no man to dispute our claim; which calls for no cumbersome process to secure it; which is lying unappropriated and unused,—the while we are living in a sinful and scandalous poverty. It is a grotesque position; and the sooner we mend it the better.

I

It is first of all necessary to clear our minds about the nature of possession. There are two kinds of possession, carnal and spiritual. Carnal possession is to have outward control of things; spiritual possession is to have inward enjoyment of them. Let us call the former "ownership" and the latter, "possession." Possession is not necessarily ownership. A man may own a great picture; but it does not follow that he possesses it. A poor man who cannot even afford to buy a good picture for himself may possess a picture which some other man owns. For he has the picture reproduced in his own soul; it says deep and gladdening things to him that the owner does not hear; and while the owner has to keep it on his walls, the other man may carry it with him wherever he goes. For a picture is not a thing to be owned but to be enjoyed; and it is the man who enjoys it who possesses it. The owner of many things may be the possessor of none of them; nay indeed, there is a real and imminent danger that he who owns many things may come to be owned by them. We cannot disguise from ourselves how grave Jesus, with His pitiless insight, saw the rich man's peril to be; and his peril has been dramatized for us once for all in the undying story of the man who turned his back on life because he had great pos-

sessions. When a man allows his opinions, his feelings, his conduct to be governed by the fact of his ownership of things, then he has unwittingly forfeited the freedom of his mind, his heart and his will; and it is evident that he no longer owns his things but that his things own him. And this transfer of ownership takes a man unawares; it comes like a thief in the night. The owner of things has to fight this danger vigilantly and unremittingly if he is to save his soul alive.

Possession is spiritual enjoyment. Our abiding wealth is what we have within. Contrary to our modern use of the term, our real estate is in our minds: and that is the only real estate there is. Real property is not fixed, irremovable property, but the property that a man may carry about in his mind; and the more of that kind of property you have the less will any other kind of property concern you: or I should say, that it will mean something different to you from what it means if you are badly off in your soul. This, as I see it, is the plain New Testament doctrine of possession. In this, as in all things else, it carries the center of gravity of life into the soul.

II

And only in this sense of possession could St. Paul say: All things are yours. And if all things are not ours, it is because we do not know how to appropriate them. Everything may become riches of the mind if we can only lay hold of it spiritually. Even money, the love of which, as St. James tells us, is the root of all evil, may become wealth to the soul if we appreciate it spiritually and turn it into a sacrament.

It is something lacking in us that we cannot make our spiritual fortunes. The materials are there; all things are ours; but we do not know how to take them. The psychologists used to speak—for aught I know, may still speak—of the "apperception-mass," that system of ideas in the mind that makes us capable of understanding and possessing a new idea. We want some such gift and power in our souls, an apparatus that will enable us to find, to seize, to digest everything that may add to the strength of our life. An English novelist has said that life is a number of little things intensely realized; and he is putting this same thing in another way. We are destitute because we are weak in this function of spiritual realization.

> This sea that bares its bosom to the moon,
> The winds that will be howling at all hours,
> And are upgathered now like sleeping flowers,
> For these, for everything, we are out of tune,
> They move us not . . .

Somehow, they fail to find us. And not only the strange and lovely things of nature, but all things else,—pictures and music and ideas and affections; and most disastrously of all, the gifts of divine grace. We no longer read the Scriptures not because they are dull but because we are; and these Scriptures that are alive with a startling and transfiguring word of God remain silent, their thunder and their whisper alike unheard. The undertones and overtones of common life that echo the very voice of God fall on ears that cannot hear them. We see only the sights and hear only the sounds on the surface of things; and the many-colored light and the rich symphony that come out of the heart of things to save our souls alive

are lost in a nameless darkness and an unpeopled silence.

III

How then are we to regain this missing sense? Well, I don't know that it is worth discussing the matter, unless we are willing to give time to it. For with the best will in the world, it takes time. It needs long looking into the dark, long "listening-in" into the silence. In the River Conway in North Wales, there is a pearl-bearing mussel; and in the olden time, they used to gather a rich harvest of pearls out of the river: one of them is set today in the British crown. But they gather no more pearls out of the Conway: the mussels are gathered and sent to market, before they have time to grow pearls. And we give ourselves no time to grow this pearl of great price, this pearl of spiritual sensibility which is also mother-of-pearl,—the wealth that breeds wealth in the soul. It is here in us, an unused gift of God: and it only needs patience and quietness and recollection and desire to become alive. But our hurried minds are not at home in the atmosphere in which spiritual eyes are slowly opened and spiritual ears slowly unstopped.

And this is indeed why we really don't know what Paul is speaking about here. What do you suppose he means? Listen to him: *All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.* What does he mean? In what sense are all these things ours? Can you so enter into Paul's own feeling that you can tell us what it is all about? What do we know of this exultant and fierce possession of the world and all that's in it? Alas, next to

nothing at all. And yet that knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. It is not that we have not the faculty of it. We have it, we have it, O believe me, we have it! And it only wants a chance of life. You need not, indeed, expect a swift apocalypse. Sometime you may have visions and revelations of the Lord, but not yet. You have to be very humble and to begin at the beginning. It will be enough for a start if you say:

> I ask no dream, no prophet-ecstasy
> No sudden rending of the veil of clay;
> No angel visitant; no opening skies;
> But take the dimness of my soul away.

IV

Yet there are here one or two things that in spite of my dimness, I think I see. I can see again that persistent Pauline note of catholicity. You remember how these Corinthians had fallen apart into factions. We, said some, are Paulines; and we, said others, are Petrines; and we, others said, are Apollonians; and we, said the rest, are simple, unsectarian Christians,—so making themselves into another sect. This was, we may say, the beginning of sectarianism in the Christian Church; and here is Paul's final answer to it. "You foolish people," he seems to say, "why do you impoverish yourselves in this way? Why bind yourselves to Paul alone when you can have Peter and Apollos as well. Why refuse the good things that Peter can give you and those rich things that Apollos brought? Why restrict your diet to the one dish; why not take the whole meal that has been set before you? They are all for you. Everything I have and everything that Peter has and everything that Apollos has, they are

all yours. Why not take them all?" There is no special virtue in having a single-track mind in religion. The defect of sectarianism is that it denies itself so much good food. It fences itself in; and does not realize which rich essential things it is fencing out. Its regular diet may be perfectly sound; but a monotonous diet is bad for the health of the soul no less than of the body. O let us have the whole feast on the table, every gift of Grace that God has given to His children! Beware of the childish folly that supposes that your little sect has all the gifts, and that the rest have only junk. We Presbyterians make much of our own special characters: we have borne long and notable witness to the sovereignty of God and to the freedom of His Grace; we have fought a long fight for spiritual independence and we have believed in an educated ministry. But do you think that we have everything? I look at the Methodists and I see their fine evangelical fervor; and I say, God give us that; we need it. I look at the Congregationalists and see their zeal for congregational freedom and public righteousness; and I say, God give us that. I look at the Anglicans and I see the noble reverence of their worship, the seemliness and dignity with which they adorn the House of God; and I say: God give us that. I look at the Catholic Church and I see its sedulous nurture of the inner life and its acknowledgment of the place and function of symbols in the worship of God,—compassed about with error, no doubt, but who among us presumes to know the mind of the Lord so wholly that he can claim to be free of error? But whatever is true, as I know the truth, I say, God give us that. I want to claim my whole inheritance in Christ. All things are ours: and be very sure that so far as in me lies you shall not

languish on a strict Presbyterian diet from this pulpit so long as I have wit and insight to claim for you and for myself any of the untold wealth that God has vouchsafed to them that love Him in any age or in any church. All things are ours. . . .

And I observe that not only everything that has been or is, but everything that is to be, is ours. We inherit not only the past, but the future. The ages to come belong to us. And do not suppose that this is a mere castle in Spain, a shadowy, fictitious property. We rarely count enough on the future. I often wonder whether Church Union would not be a vastly swifter and surer affair if we founded our Basis of Union in the future and not, as we do, in the past. We can never wholly agree about the past; but the future is different. It has no history, no vested interests, no divisions. Instead of a Basis of Union drawn up by skillful compounding of antecedents, we should do better with a flaming manifesto of hope and purpose: and we should find it easier to agree about the past when we had defined a common future. The future is ours: it is ours absolutely: we can do with it what we will. Our very foundation is partly laid in the future; for we are built, not on a dead person or a passage of history, but upon the Christ, who, according to the Scriptures, was and is and *is to be.*

There are other things here upon which we might dwell to our profit. We might observe for our comfort that death is ours: death, that ancient terror, that last enemy. We can claim death as part of our inheritance. We add it to our store of wealth. And no transformation wrought by the Gospel is greater than this. The story of mankind is that men *through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage;* and this

great miracle has been wrought: that death is become for us the sign of our final emancipation, the door and the charter of an eternal freedom. But few of us have yet learned to take death to our hearts as a friend. But the hour is spent, and we cannot dwell upon these things any longer. Yet two last words must be said.

All things are ours, and *we are Christ's*. This is the best of all: yes, and it is the ground of all. All things are ours, *because* we are Christ's. This is our title to the inheritance: and it is our title to the *whole* inheritance. It is not merely our misfortune but our sin against ourselves to bind ourselves to Paul or to Apollos or to Cephas when we belong to Christ. It is not merely that we make ourselves poor but that we deny the one and only head of the Church when we insist upon being a mere fraction of His body. The more I read the New Testament, the less do I understand why men do not grow fiercely dissatisfied with being merely Presbyterians or Methodists or Anglicans or with any other fractional name whatsoever, and do not rise up and sweep all these disfiguring and impoverishing fences away and proclaim themselves Christians and Churchmen without any limiting label at all. We are Christ's,—not John Knox's or John Calvin's or John Wesley's or anybody else's. We are Christ's; and that should be good enough for any of us.

And Christ is God's. How the man does drive it home! That is the last word; and there is nothing more to be said.

X

CHRIST'S FOOLS

I Cor. 4, 10: "We are fools for Christ's sake . . ."

When a man of sense boasts of being a fool, the matter is worth looking into. The word is not usually regarded as a compliment. When a man uses it of himself, it is commonly because he wishes to use the last and most lurid term of self-loathing. When Saul in the bitterness of his heart was pursuing David, and David had shown in a very dramatic and convincing way his love and loyalty to the king, Saul was overwhelmed with shame and remorse: *I have played the fool,* said he. That is the bottommost circle of the inferno of self-contempt. Most of us know something of it. When we have made stupid mistakes, when we have allowed ourselves to fall into some costly sin and the bill comes up for payment, when we have missed some opportunity of happiness through indolence or cowardice, this is the judgment we pass upon ourselves: *I have played the fool.* Probably most men find it harder to forgive the stupidity of their sin than its sinfulness. They are more sorry for themselves than for their sin. They repent their folly more than their wickedness.

But here is a man who calls himself a fool without being ashamed of himself. Few men have had their heads so well screwed on as St. Paul. You may, if you

will only read his story, find him in a dozen tight corners; but he always knows (as the saying is) what card to play. He was a past master of the art of tact. When you pass on from tactics to strategy, you discover a large, heroic wisdom in the man, the sort of thing that you call statesmanship. St. Paul was no fool. But he had made a little discovery which every good and wise man sooner or later makes; namely, that when some people called him a fool, it was to be regarded as a compliment. If a scoundrel calls you a scoundrel, you naturally take it as a certificate of good character. And somebody had called Paul a fool. The Apostle said,—"Well, if that man calls me a fool, it must be something to be proud of. Very well, then; let me be a fool."

I

Now, I suspect that some one in Corinth had called Paul a fool. For he plays with the word in this ironical way through both the Corinthian Epistles. The words "fool," "foolish" and "foolishness" occur about forty times in the New Testament; eighteen of the forty are in these two Epistles, and in practically every case with a strong accent of irony. In the first chapter, the word occurs several times; but there with reference to the philosopher's gibe at the Cross. But here the note is somewhat different. There was a good deal wrong with this Church in Corinth. For one thing, it was ridden and rent by a strong sectarian spirit. Feeling was apparently running very high and in their disputes some disparaging things had been said about Paul. You can pick some of them up here and there through these two Epistles. They had said insulting things about his personal appearance,—had called him a

weakling. They had said that, as a speaker, he was contemptible and uncouth; and he probably did speak Greek with a strong Jewish accent which would be an offense to the fastidious ears of men who supposed themselves to be cultured. Some of them seem to have suggested that they had outgrown his teaching,—they had long gone past that infant-school stuff; and probably some one in a moment of heat had called him a fool. It was all just the sort of wild, bitter, irrelevant talk that you hear when there is a religious controversy afoot, talk that supposes insult to be argument. But Paul was invulnerable to insult. You said to him: "Sir, you are a fool;" and he quietly answers: "Thank you. I take it as a compliment; I am glad to be what you call a fool." It was a way of turning the other cheek; and if you had still retained a little ordinary insight, you would presently discover that it was the shrewdest and the most disturbing thrust at your self-complacency that you had ever received.

II

But there was more than temper at Corinth. The Church was suffering from that deplorable disease that we call a "swelled head." They had not only said contemptuous things about St. Paul; they had also said some boastful and swelling things about themselves. You can hear the echo of some of them in this passage. "We are complete," they said; "we have everything we need; we are independent and able to stand on our own feet. We do not want any interference from the outside; we are capable of governing ourselves; there is nothing more that you can teach us." They seem to have had a very good conceit of

themselves. They thought they were making a brave show in the face of the world; they felt that they stood well in the community; and they did not want this Jew to come butting in.

"Very well," says St. Paul, "have it your way. You are, no doubt, all that you say you are. You are rich, self-sufficient, independent, important: and naturally you have no use for these poor fools who go by the name of Apostles. They certainly contrast very strangely with you. In order to make the antithesis as sharp as possible he uses a figure from the theater. *We are made a spectacle,* he says; and the Greek word for spectacle is *theatron.* "We are made a show of; and we are not leading the turn in the show, but the tailpiece. We come last, at the end of the program, as if we were men condemned to death,"—the allusion being to the Roman custom of having, as the last item of the program in the arena, all men who had been sentenced to death thrown in to the beasts, to provide a last thrill for the jaded appetites of the spectators. It is a terrific picture. Remember that Paul believed that the world was coming to a swift end. It was near the close of the show; the last item for the day was being staged, God's Apostles were being thrust into the arena, under the jeers of the crowd, facing the jaws of the lion; *and the Christians of Corinth were sitting in the best seats in the dress circle, looking on!*

And then he changes the picture. *We are fools for Christ's sake.* It is now not tragedy, but comedy. We are the comic relief in the piece; the clowns in the arena; the awkward squad; the people who perform the antics. And we do some really funny turns. We who might be respectable, well-fed citizens choose to go about the world paupers and tramps and hobos; we

who could easily sponge a living out of other people actually work with our hands. And the audience goes into shrieks of laughter. But we have still funnier tricks in our repertory. *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure, we take it lying down; being defamed, we entreat.* Oh, yes, it is irresistibly comic. We are treated as the filth of the world, as the scum of the earth; and we take it all smiling. It is an incredible, side-splitting farce . . . aye, *and the Christians of Corinth are sitting in the front row of the gallery—laughing!*

III

Now, just what effect this terrible irony had on the Corinthians we do not know. Nor indeed does it matter very much to us. But what does matter is the question that St. Paul raises for ourselves; and that we may put in this way: that the difference between the way of Christ and the way of the world is the difference between sanity and insanity. Paul had no doubt of the utter and eternal sanity of the way of Christ; and he knew that the world that called it insane was proving his own insanity: The man who called him a fool for following the Spirit of Christ proved himself a madman. And if the world no longer calls the Christian society insane, what is it that has happened? Has the world grown sane or has the Church contracted the world's insanity? It must be one of the two. You have only to read your New Testament in order to find out that it is not the first that has happened; it is palpably still the same old world. We are left with the tragic conclusion that we Christian people have somehow lost the divine insanity of Jesus Christ and of His Apostle Paul. And it follows on this that we

shall have to become fools for Christ's sake, if we are ever to count in the world again. What the Church should be having is not the world's respect but its insults, its taunts, its jeers. For Christ has no more traffic with Belial today than He had nineteen hundred years ago.

The question we have to face and to consider is this: Is the Cross of Calvary the wisdom of God or not? Does it reveal to us the deepest truth in the heart of God and therefore the final truth for the life of man? Is it the reality which is a matter of life and death to every rational soul, or is it a fantastic illusion, a mere mirage of an impossible life? Are we on the one and only track of life when we try to live by it, or are we chasing a will-o'-the-wisp? We have to make up our minds about that. Which is sanity and which is insanity,—the way of the Cross or the way of worldly wisdom? Were Jesus and Paul really fools, or are we?

IV

Put it to the proof; and take for tests the three things that Paul thought looked like a clown's antics to the Corinthians:

1. Being reviled, we . . . ? *Being reviled,* it was said of Jesus, *He reviled not again. Being reviled,* says St. Paul, *we bless.* Being reviled, we . . . ? Well, what is it that you do? Oh, you give the fellow a Roland for his Oliver; that is the natural and proper thing for a man to do. You hurl the insult back in his teeth.

2. Being persecuted, we . . . ? Ah, but we are not even persecuted. Apparently we are not worth persecuting. The world can afford to ignore us. Is it that we are so like it that it fears no trouble from us? But

suppose you were persecuted. *Being persecuted,* says St. Paul, *we endure.* Being persecuted, we . . .? What would you do? Do you think, as you know yourself, that you would be likely to take it lying down?

3. Being defamed, we . . .? *Being defamed,* says St. Paul, *we pray for them.* Being defamed, we . . .? What, I ask, would we do? Pray for them? Do we pray at all, anyhow? I suspect it would hardly occur to us to pray for them. We should just go off to the lawyer and start a suit for libel.

These are, after all, elementary tests. If we fail in these, what hope is there that we should succeed under more exacting tests,—the tests that call for the renunciation of our worldly hope, that may involve for you as they did for a young man long ago that you sell all your goods and give them to the poor, that may require you to abandon your prospect of business success and go to live a life of toil and beggary in some outlandish village in the heart of Africa for Christ's sake? How many of us would be able to pass those ultimate tests? Suppose the living Christ who is here with us should assume a bodily presence and come to you in that pew and put you to one of these tests, what would your answer be? I wonder how many of us would not go away sorrowful.

But there is one thing I can tell you. If you, facing your Lord, rose up and said, "Lord, here am I; send me, do with me what thou wilt;" and some fine day you set off to live Christ in a slum or to preach Him in the Northwest or to heal men's diseases in some remote Chinese city, I can tell you what the world would say. It would say, "The fool!"

V

There is another thing I can say; and I am quite sure of it, for I have made the discovery of it in my own heart. Here are we, men and women, in this Church tonight; and there are few of us, I fancy, who do not know in our hearts that the way of the Cross is the way of life. Perhaps most of us profess to be going that way, and profess it quite sincerely. Well, the spirit of Christ comes to us and points out to us some task, some path of duty that implies the surrender of something we deeply cherish, requires us to make some difficult renunciation. Let us be quite honest. We should stand still in our tracks; we should hesitate and fumble and stammer and excuse ourselves; and we should go away sorrowful. And why? Simply, I think, because we have not acquired the Christian momentum. The impulse of the Spirit is weak and unsure in our souls. We have not yet been caught into the swing of the Kingdom of Christ. We are only Christian in spots, in fits and starts. The steady invincible thrust of the indwelling Christ has not yet begun to carry us along bodily. We have not reached the stage at which the constraint of the love of Christ takes hold of the whole of us, for good and all. And if I am not telling your story, I know that I am telling my own.

The trouble with us is that we have only made a partial surrender; and every hour we spend with a divided loyalty exposes us to the saddest of all ends. We are trying to sit on two stools; and you know where the man who does that lands at last. We are trying to hold to Christ with the one hand and to the world with the other; we are as a house divided against itself;

and we have good authority for predicting what happens to such a house. There is in us a hesitation, a resistance to the constraint of Christ. It is the pull of the world on our hearts and wills; and so long as this tug-of-war lasts, our lives will go on canceling themselves out, until slowly there begins a slow imperceptible drift over the line. And while you may go on naming the name of Christ with your lips, the world will presently be enthroned in your heart. You may keep the Christian shell around a kernel of Antichrist. I can see such a man at the end of his days, with his treasury full and his heart empty, poor amid his riches, disillusioned, left with nothing more to live for; and he looks back over the way he has come. There was a moment once when . . . but he let it pass. And in bitterness of heart, he passes judgment on his life: "I have played the fool!"

He had a friend; and that day when they stood together at the crossroads, his friend took the other road. He lost sight of him soon after; but now and again he used to hear of him; he had gone into some slum to work with boys for the love of Christ. It was an idiotic thing to do, when he might with his ability have made a fortune and lived in a gentlemanly ease. Everybody said that he must have had a tile loose to give everything up in that way; and there were some of his friends who didn't hesitate to say roundly that the fellow was a fool. . . . When at last he came into the Presence, the King looked at him and said: "Well?" The man told him what he had done; and the King asked him: "And what did they say about it?" The man answered: "They said I was a fool." "Good," said the King; "pass on, sit with me on my throne. You will find yourself at home here; this is

the paradise of fools like you. You will find that heroic old fool Paul here; and did they not say down there that even I was beside myself? Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

You who are at the crossroads, watch your step!

XI

ON KEEPING THE FEAST

I Cor. 5, 7-8: "For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ; wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

JEROME, saint and scholar of the fourth century, says in one of his letters that whenever he reads the Apostle Paul, he seems to hear not words but thunders. Every man who reads his Paul intelligently has that same feeling about him. He certainly is capable of thunder: and on due occasion he is not slow to let his thunder loose. But it is worth observing that he cannot keep up his thunder long; even when the storm is loudest, sunshine and clear weather are not very far away.

Now, this chapter opens with a thunderclap; and we are not altogether prepared for it. To be sure, the weather has been somewhat unsettled from the beginning of the Epistle. A strong wind has been driving heavy clouds across the sky, clouds of expostulation and remonstrance, of reproof and irony, with now and again a brief, heartening spell of sunshine. But there is no sign of a thunderstorm; and it overtakes us unawares. St. Paul has made us feel that the sectarian spirit is about the worst evil that could befall a Christian society. But there was even worse to follow. If faction was bad, what was to be said of fornication?

It was terrible that they should be quarrelsome; but it was beyond speech that any of them should be immoral. Besides, the immorality was open and unashamed. Add to all this that the Church not only did not rebuke it but tolerated it; and even this was not the limit of their shame. This misguided Church was actually puffed up about it, just as a foolish man may boast of his sin, to try to save his face, when he is being rebuked for it.

Are you surprised then that Paul thundered? If you are, read over again the first chapter of Romans, that terrible apocalypse of sin; and you will see the reason of the thunder. Pagan society was being eaten up by all sorts of sexual vice; and the traditional Christian horror of the degradation and perversion of the sex instinct was born of a profoundly true sense that it undermined the citadel of life. Paul's treatment of the situation is precise and summary. The evil thing must be thrown out, neck and crop, without temporizing, without parley, without delay. Out it goes! Let the guillotine fall now!

It was indeed a situation in which compromise or concession was impossible. The Church ceased to mean anything if this vice of Pagan society overcame it. It would forfeit its very title to exist if it succumbed to the social drift outside its walls. It had come into being in order to inject a new, pure, wholesome life into this corrupt society, to inoculate it with cleanliness, to invade its rankness with its own sweetness and light. But the salt was beginning to lose its savor. It was a desperate position needing a desperate remedy. This first trickle of corruption would soon grow into a deluge. And St. Paul was right. No one who is acquainted with the history of the Church is ignorant of

how rapidly a lowering of moral standards can become a wholesale moral landslide. St. Paul was not pointing a moral with an apt quotation when he said: *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* He was stating the universal law: that moral uncleanness, tolerated and winked at in the Christian society, is a self-imposed sentence of death.

But notice how naturally and without effort the man finds his way out into the sunshine. Paul's mind was not enslaved by a rigid habit of logic; if it had been, he would have argued the matter out to its conclusion without a break. But he does not do so. He seems to lose the thread of his argument: and presently he discovers that he has done so, picks it up again and finishes his say about it. But in the meantime, he lets himself go into a priceless little digression, a patch of bright, quickening sunshine. It came about in this way. It was the word "leaven" that did it; and that reminded him of the Passover, and of how all the leaven had to be removed out of the house on the morning before the paschal lamb was slain. And at the back of his mind was something he had yet to say to the Corinthians about some other kind of festival. But plainly what struck him as anomalous was the circumstance that while the Jews removed the leaven out of their houses before the paschal lamb was offered, these Corinthian Christians were taking in and allowing the leaven to remain in the house, *after* their paschal lamb had been sacrificed. The shame of it! "Wake up, you Corinthians. *Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us:* the deed has been done. Out then, straightway, with the old leaven! And let us keep the feast." See how the scene has been changed—and how swiftly. A moment ago, it was the murk and squalor of a police-

court trying some filthy case; now it is the gladness and brightness of a festival board. A moment ago, it was the dull sickening thud of the guillotine; now it is the holy hilarity of a company of redeemed souls.

I

Happily for us, we need take no great account of the dark background against which this festival board is set. We know where such things belong; and they do not belong here. The Church of God made up its mind long ago how it should deal with immorality of this flagrant type. There are falls and failures toward which it has learnt to exercise charity and forgiveness; but sin that flaunts itself, sin unashamed and impenitent, it cannot away with; and like a healthy body that shakes a noisome toxin out of itself, the Church does soon or late extrude from its own body all manner of gross sin. Perhaps a time will come when its life will be so pure that even the more subtle sins cannot breathe its air; and pride and love of money and greed and arrogance will either perish in men's souls or take them away where they can indulge themselves without discomfort. For the Church must needs be pure. You remember how it was said that Cæsar's wife should be beyond suspicion: how much more should the Bride of Christ be holy, without spot or blemish or any such thing! We shall do well to search our own hearts lest there be any evil way or root of bitterness in us that disfigures and dishonors the "Lily of the King" in the eyes of men.

Meantime let us take heart of grace from this: that *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* You remember that the Jewish Passover was the annual festival in

which the Jews commemorated their romantic escape from Egypt and what came of it. In Egypt they had been a collection of tribes; but they went out of Egypt a nation, a single people. Translated into a Christian idiom—the new Passover is the memorial and the symbol of the birth of a new people, that new race with which God designed to populate the earth, a race embracing all races, a people comprising all peoples. And as at the Passover, a lamb was slain as a memorial offering, so now, the Lamb of God has been sacrificed; —but with this difference: that the Jews kept their Passover once a year; but with the Christians, it was Passover all the year round. The life of the Christian society is a perpetual feast. The Church has indeed its appointed seasons, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and so forth. But it does not esteem one day above another day. And if it keeps Advent in the month of December, it is in order that the spirit of Advent may inform all the rest of the year. If it keeps holiday at Christmas and at Easter, it is chiefly in order to remind us that for Christian souls, every day should be Christmas Day and Easter Day. *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:* for us, therefore, life should be a continuous and unbroken feast.

II

Now, this figure of the feast implies two main ideas. First of all, a feast is a social event. A man cannot hold a feast alone, unless he is a glutton. At a feast, the meat and drink are secondary things. You ask a few friends to dinner; but you don't do so to provide them with food, but to provide them and yourself with an occasion of fellowship. It is not the fare but the

friendship that gives it its meaning. The Passover had its social symbolism. It was the memorial of the birth of a *people.* The Corinthians lived in a civilization in which all manner of guilds and sodalities had their stated festival in order to affirm and to cement their solidarity. And St. Paul is quite clear in this Epistle that it was a prime function of the Lord's Table to affirm what he calls "the body," that is, the living and organic fellowship of the Christian society. The Lord's Table gives the clew and the keynote to the entire life of the Church. Its worship and its work should all be eucharistic in spirit. But there is a suggestion here that goes beyond all this. *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;* behind our fellowship lies that momentous and creative fact. In Jesus of Nazareth, God was giving the world a new start, sowing the seed of a new people, a new race; and we are that people: we are that new race: we are this new redeemed and redemptive society in a dying world. And this is our seal and our charter: *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* Our act of incorporation was the Cross of Calvary. The old architects were working on a sound symbolism when they built cruciform churches: they sensed the enormous fact that the ground plan of the Christian society was the Cross. And that makes the figure of the feast inadequate. You have to add to the picture of the festival board, a picture of an army with banners. We are not only a society of friends, but a crusading host. We are to be at home both at the supper-table and on the battlefield. We are to live and thrive not only through our fellowship but through our fighting. We are a fellowship in order to create a world of fellowship. We are at war against the world's wars. *Christ our Passover is*

sacrificed for us: by that sign we live in peace; and by that sign we go forth to war.

III

But the second idea that clings to this figure of the feast is that of gladness. A feast means festivity. The world has no monopoly of joy; and I am sure that a joyless Christianity is no manner of Christianity at all. No book ever written saw the tragedy of this world so truly, so poignantly as the New Testament does: yet in the face of that dark spectacle, its note is the note of joy. How a Christian soul that knows the New Testament can wear a gloomy face is a riddle to which there is no answer. I heard a little time ago of a young woman who expressed the opinion that "Christianity is so jolly." She meant well, and she meant to say a true thing. But she missed the point: for there is a world of difference between jollity and joy. Jollity is mere levity, mere effervescence; and sometimes only mere rowdyism. But joy is a deep sunlit river, full without overflowing, that has its sources in the divine hinterland of life, that makes no commotion in its flow but irrigates all our days with a gladness that is peace and with a contentment that is power. And in very truth, it is the Christian only who can enjoy the true laughter and fun of life. If we were to ask ourselves who among men had best recaptured the spirit of Jesus, we should all agree as to the man. It was Francis of Assisi: and though he had espoused the Lady Poverty and went about in rags, his days were spent in a high hilarity. He was, as he said, *le jongleur de Dieu,* the jester, the tumbler, the clown of God. He knew the tears of things; but he knew their laughter no

less. There is a rare old medieval fable about a *jongleur,* who because he could do nothing else went and stood on his head before the image of the Virgin; and the Virgin and her attendant saints graciously and nobly thanked him for his entertainment. A fable, to be sure, but with a real moral. It was the almost irresponsible exuberance of gratitude and hope,—which is at bottom the authentic joy of life. And seeing from what bondage of error and into what liberty of hope we have been delivered, we have no title to walk the earth as though all its woes were upon our shoulders. For remember your calling, brethren. You heard the good news of a Kingdom of God; and what more gladdening than good news! And you were called to be bearers of this same good news. Let not your gait or your countenance give the lie to the goodness and the gladness of your news. It is not for us to perform antics, or to cut capers before the Lord: but it is at least our part to show "the glorious morning face," irradiated by the good news, news henceforth forevermore, underwritten and guaranteed by Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us.

IV

But recall, as we conclude, that we are to keep this feast with sincerity and truth. At the pagan festivals, things went on that cannot be spoken of . . . and the next day, men went about with an evil taste in their mouths and some with self-loathing in their hearts. You cannot live every day on the festival level except by a strict regard for purity and cleanness of mind and body. It does not take long for excess of any kind to wear away the gilt and the sheen on the face of life;

and it leaves you empty and sick. The words "sincerity" and "truth" here are used in antithesis to "malice" and "wickedness." Malice does not mean what it connotes in modern speech. It means evil in the mind; and wickedness means evil in the deed. And sincerity means purity in thought and truth means incorruptibility in action. It all reflects back upon the foulness which Paul has been dealing with so faithfully. The Christian feast is kept with pure minds and clean hands: and when these are lacking it ceases to be either Christian or a feast. How far we maintain this festival character in our Christian fellowship you may enquire of your own hearts. How deeply does our solidarity reach? How much of gladness is there in our coming together? I have my fears: neither our fellowship nor our gladness seems to be of the exuberant kind; we are held back by some reticence, some shamefastness: and I have a misgiving that we are not even reasonably warm in our comradeship in Christ. Do you think that we may be lacking in sincerity or truth; and that that deficiency is despoiling us of some of our joy in one another in Christ? The Greek word translated "sincerity" appears to mean "capable of standing up to the light." It is the same idea, I imagine, as "transparent" when it is used of character. Can your heart stand the light? I fear for my own. I have an uneasy feeling that if it were exposed to the divine searchlight that it would reveal a very plague of noisome creatures scurrying to get under cover, ugly vermin that hate the light; and these pests are consuming what should be my joy in Christ and my gladness in you. Nay, is it not something that you no less than I know in our deepest hearts that we ourselves need, again and yet again, the

kind of summary and outright moral purge that Paul bids the Corinthian Church to administer to itself? Tell me, do you know of any prayer that you need to say more sedulously than this: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit?* I know of no prayer that more befits me.

XII

BROTHER ASS

I Cor. 6, 19: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost . . .?"
I Cor. 9, 27: "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage . . ."

It was, as you know, St. Francis of Assisi who called his body "Brother Ass"; and as he lay dying, he is reported to have said, "I have been too hard on Brother Ass." The word itself is characteristic of the quaint, friendly humor with which St. Francis looked out upon and spoke of the world and all that's in it: but it also compresses into three syllables the paradox of the traditional Christian attitude toward the body; namely, that it is to be treated at once with reverence and with contempt. These two passages from St. Paul reflect the same essential attitude, stated, however, more sternly. The body is at once both friend and enemy. It is at the same time the temple of the Holy Ghost and the anteroom of Hell.

In the main, however, it is true to say that the predominant attitude of the Christian mind toward the body has been that of contempt more than that of reverence; it has been treated less as brother than as ass, more as enemy than as friend. Probably this is due to a persistent and subtle heresy which the human mind finds it difficult to shake off. It is a form of what is called Manicheism,—the view that identifies the

difference between matter and spirit as the difference between darkness and light; and which leads to the conclusion that the body is a work of darkness and is therefore to be treated with scorn and hatred, to be mortified and buffeted and brought into bondage. What there is to be said for this attitude we shall consider presently. But it has led to a treatment of the body in the interests of the soul so harsh that it has frequently defeated itself. St. Ignatius Loyola came in after-years to think that his austerities and mortifications in the cave of Manresa had been overdone; and Brother Ass had retaliated upon him by limiting his physical resources. Francis Thompson in his famous essay on "Health and Holiness" said that in the Middle Ages, "the most ardent saints ended in the confession of a certain remorse for their tyrannous usage of the accursed flesh." And there would seem to be little doubt that certain morbid conditions of soul may be directly traced to religious abuse of the body. "Better far," said a well-known Jesuit spiritual director, "to eat meat on Good Friday than to live in war with every one about us. I fear much that you do not take enough food and rest. You stand in need of both and it is not wise to starve yourself into misery. Jealousy and all similar passions become intensified when the body is weak." Evidently there is a limit to the religious maltreatment of Brother Ass. Just as the worm is said to turn, so Brother Ass is apt to have somewhat of his own back from those who unduly belabor him even in a good cause. And if this be true of the religious abuse of the body, how much truer must it be that to put the body to vicious uses must work havoc in the soul?

I

Let us try to get this matter straightened out in our minds. The first thing to be said is that the distinction between body and soul needs to be restated. We cannot at this time of day, in the light that science is more and more bringing to us, accept the distinction in quite the old form; least of all can we suppose that the natural relationship between body and soul is one of opposition and enmity. Frederic Myers makes St. Paul say—and it is true of one side of St. Paul's mind:—

> Never, O Christ,—so stay me from relenting
> Shall there be truce betwixt my flesh and soul.

But that cannot be the whole truth, certainly it cannot be the deepest truth about this relationship.

As I see it, the first point to be made in a discussion of this sort is that though there be a soul and a body, there is but one life; and the difference between soul and body is not so much a difference of substance as a difference of function. They are organs which serve the same life in two different relations. The body is the organ by which life in man relates itself to a world of time and space and matter. The soul is the organ by which life in man relates itself to another world, unseen and intangible, which we call the world of spirit. I am not something compounded of body and soul. I am a person, an individualized point of life; and I possess for my use a body and a soul. But I am distinct from both, and I use both for the maintenance of the two broad aspects of my existence. With my body I deal with the things that are seen; with my soul I deal with the things that are unseen.

Now, as far as our knowledge carries us, man seems to be the only form of life that is faced with the problem of living in two worlds at the same time. Other animals have intelligence,—and he would be a rash man who would venture to say at what point back on the scale of life, intelligence disappears. Birds would appear to have some feeling for beauty; and some animals, like dogs, that live much in human company, may seem to develop the rudiments of a moral sense. These things, however, we can only surmise. But man appears to be the only creature that consciously refuses to accept this world as its only home. We have in us intimations of another world, which lies beyond the reach of our bodily senses; we feel that we belong to it and that it belongs to us, though we do not know much about it; and we have not the control over it that we have over this world. Throughout all the history that we have of our race, man seems to have been pursued by a persistent and vigorous sense that its ultimate destiny lies within that other world. We are forever being driven to try to break into it. That is what the mystics have been at; that is what the Psychical Research people like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle are after; and that indeed is what this long, varied and untiring search that we call Religion means. It is the search for the true magnetic pole of life, the endeavor to explore what mankind feels in its bones to be the Promised Land and the Golden Age of Life. It is true that we have not penetrated very far into that hidden country. But the attempt to do so seems to be the special distinguishing mark of the human stage in the evolution of life. As it has been since its first minute beginnings on this planet, life is on the march in us also. Religion, philosophy, art,—this threefold

search for some transcendental glory of goodness, truth and beauty is the triple flame of the upward aspiration of life in this being that we call man. And the soul of man is the organ by which he makes this pilgrimage, the wings by which he seeks to rise to this unseen glory.

But all this he has to do within the conditions of terrestrial life. Day by day, he has to live in a world of time and space and things; and he has at the same time to establish increasing relations with the unseen. That indeed is his main business,—which appears to be not only good Scripture but good biology. The biologists tell us that for ten thousand years there has been no notable progress in the evolution of the body and its functions; and the future growth of man is bound up with the growth of his soul. And this must be as true of the individual now as it is true of the race in the long stretches of biological time. So that we do, in a way, come out at last at St. Francis' opinion, that the body is Brother Ass. It is the ass which carries me through the world while my soul is developing its wings. It is the inn, the caravanserai, the earthly house of this tabernacle, in which I lodge while I am fitting out and training for my pilgrimage into the world of spirit. The human body and its functions represent the last achievement of physical evolution, the farthest camp it has pitched on its journey through time and space and matter; and the awakening of the soul is the sign that its journey is not over and that it has to pass on to some regions still beyond.

II

So that it follows that the right treatment of the body is that which enables it to minister to the growth

of the soul. The body is not an end in itself: its office is (to borrow a golfing term) to be a good "stance" for the soul; the platform from which the soul may (as it were) practice flying. I might (had I time) go on to show how perfectly adapted it is for that purpose, how marvelously contrived and fashioned to be the junior partner of the soul in the business of life. But we do it and ourselves a disservice when we forget its proper place. A good deal of the present vogue of physical culture is absurd and mischievous body-worship; the glorification of the human animal. I confess to being very tired of those pictures on periodical covers of male and female Samsons covered with huge hard clots of superfluous and useless brawn. That sort of thing is pure and simple negation and arrest of the spiritual pilgrimage of man; and if this obsession of brawn and muscle goes on much longer, we shall soon be back in the fields eating grass. This is not to say that I condemn physical culture and athletics. On the contrary, I hold them to be part of the necessary discipline of the body in the interests of the soul; but their aim should be not muscular grossness, but health and grace of bodily carriage. It has been said that health is holiness; both words do indeed come to us from the same root; and both at bottom mean "wholeness." And certainly good health is, for those who can win and keep it, an article of holiness. Not indeed that it is an indispensable condition of holiness. Many people who have suffered much physical infirmity have achieved great spiritual beauty. There is a secret for turning our sicknesses and sufferings to the advantage of the soul. But for most people, good health is a condition of spiritual well-being; and by good health, I mean that state of the body in which it

functions so normally, so effortlessly and so smoothly that it does not call any attention to itself.

Now, I am not here to give a recipe for good health. This only will I venture to say,—in the main, for most people most of the time, the preservation of health is chiefly an affair of avoiding excess. A friend of mine told me the other day that in the United States, the publishing firms have no books on their lists for which there is a steadier demand than those that tell you how to avoid growing fat or how, having grown fat, you may get rid of it. There are a few people who have a physical predisposition to put on fat,—they, unfortunately, cannot help themselves; but for the rest, fatness of body is simply the penalty of over-eating; and I have observed how frequently fatness of body goes with grossness of soul. Too much work, too much play, too much worry, too much leisure,—every form of excess upsets the equilibrium of the body. The man who lives a sedentary life should not sit down too long; he should put his boots on and take a long walk. The active man should take his boots off and give himself a proper rest. And with a little observation and common sense the ordinary man should be able to discover a technique of daily habit which will,—barring accidents and unforeseeable complications,—keep his body from troubling him.

But this is also to be added. If the body is to be the good henchman of the soul, then it must be subject to a moral discipline no less than a physical. Indeed, shall we not say, in view of the high office of the body, that all its disciplines are of a moral sort? But now I am thinking especially of the danger of using the body and abusing it, merely in self-indulgence. It is the price that we pay for the height of bodily and mental

capacity to which the divine providence in evolution has brought us that we can do what the animals cannot. They *are* animals; but we can enjoy being animals and make ourselves more animalish than any animal. The pull of the animal in our bodies is naturally strong; but having freedom and mind we exploit what is in the animal a natural spontaneous process into an occasion of self-indulgence. Especially is this true of the inmost sanctuary of life, where it works its unceasing miracle of perpetuation, in the mysterious, lovely and holy processes of sex. And these we exploit into forms of revolting and destructive self-indulgence. Nothing in life so completely makes the body the enemy of the soul as does this: and no abuse of the body is visited with retribution so swift or so awful. It is this deadly pull of the animal on the body that drove Paul to say: *I buffet the body and bring it into bondage, lest after I have preached to others I myself should be cast away.* All the same this animal pull is not deadly until the mind makes it so. It is the carnal mind that makes the animalized body; and the secret of the clean body is the clean mind.

III

And this leads me to the last point. I quoted the saying a moment ago that health is holiness. But we have to add that holiness is also health. By holiness I mean simply the quest and culture of spirituality; and it seems clear that this has certain specific and wholesome reactions on the body. Some parts of the Church of God are being considerably exercised today by the question of spiritual healing; and there have been some interesting enquiries into the matter. There is a danger involved in this movement of making religious ex-

ercises subordinate to physical well-being, which is putting the cart before the horse. But another thing is clear, that certain spiritual states and exercises do have a beneficial effect upon the body. This is particularly true of diseases which have a nervous origin. Take the hypochondriac, for instance, the man who is prone to think himself afflicted with every bodily disorder. It is a sure cure for him if you can alter his mental center of gravity, to shift it from the malady of his body to the well-being of his soul. This it is that explains the achievements of Christian Science, mental healing and the like. But I think the matter goes deeper than this. No man can say where the frontier between the physical and the spiritual lies in the human constitution. They are so closely intertwined that the condition of the one reacts to the condition of the other. An unclean body means an unclean soul; a morbid soul induces a morbid body. And I cannot but believe that a great accession of health and well-being to the soul will make for health and well-being in the body. When a man in an outright, decisive act of surrender dedicates himself to God, it seems to me natural that his health should improve. But don't suppose from this that you should dedicate yourself to God for the sake of your health: for that is only dedicating God to the service of your body; and that will work no miracles.

I pray you to notice that never in the life of Jesus do you read that He suffered from any bodily sickness or infirmity. I cannot even recall any occasion on which He is said to have been tired and weary. And in that there may be a useful parable for us. When we do in truth become the temples of the Holy Spirit, do you suppose that that makes no difference to our bodies? Is it not indeed then that they must achieve their final

perfection and beauty? That is the end for which they were made; and the human body received the imprint of Divinity when the Word became flesh. I have in my time known many saintly men and women; and it is not once or twice that I have seen, as the years passed and they draw ever closer to God, what looked like a refinement of the very flesh of their faces, a growing charm of expression, a strange grace informing the tone of voice, the gesture; a certain dignity coming to adorn their carriage, as though the indwelling spirit were transfiguring their clay into some celestial fabric. The Greeks were right in insisting on the beauty of the human form; and Blake was right in speaking of "the human form divine." And if it is not beautiful in our eyes, it is because it is so often deformed by a degrading environment or made ugly and repulsive by vicious excess. But it was meant to be beautiful as a temple of God: and it only comes into its own kingdom of beauty when it is indwelt by the Spirit of God. The body is a gift of God, a garment which He did not disdain to wear. Let us honor it; let us keep it clean; let us guard it from defilement and from disease; but above all, let us give it and treat it as a house of God. Dr. T. R. Glover was once giving counsel to a group of students who were starting out on a campaign of missionary education among young people in a certain district; and with other things he said this: "Gentlemen, as you go about these churches, do not sit on tables, lounge about or allow yourselves attitudes and postures that are uncomely. *Remember the Incarnation.*" Aye, remember the Incarnation! The Word became flesh; and in that hour flesh became divine. And that is the level upon which henceforth men were intended to regard and to treat their bodies.

When you are tempted to courses that may degrade or defile or weaken your body, *remember the Incarnation.* And if you find yourself becoming overconcerned and overpreoccupied with your body, being tempted to spend too much time on it and perhaps even a little to worship it, then, too, *remember the Incarnation!* For that will remind you that the body was made not for your admiration or your care but for the use and the indwelling of God. And before and above all things be mindful and careful of this,—that whether in the body or out of the body, you are not your own. For you were bought with a price.

XIII

ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN

I Cor. 9, 23, 24: "I am become all things to all men that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake . . ."

I

THERE is more than one sense in which a man may become all things to all men. There was, for instance, the Vicar of Bray who had something like a genius of accommodation. Through the stormy and changeful scenes of the seventeenth century, with its breathless vicissitudes of public religion, the Vicar held on to his living:

> And this is the law that I'll maintain
> Until my dying day, Sir;
> That whatsoever king shall reign,
> I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir . . .

But we have a short and ugly name for that kind of person. We say that he is a trimmer. And there are a number of picturesque phrases in which we describe his performances. We say he "holds to the hare and runs with the hound," or that he watches "how the cat jumps," or "how the wind blows"; and the like. All of which indicates the contempt in which the common sense of mankind holds that type of character. And it is not in a country parish only that you will find the

Vicar of Bray. He may be the editor of a newspaper; and not a few editors have gained a doubtful fame by the skill with which they have sat on the fence until the drift of public opinion on some important subject had set. Or the Vicar of Bray may be the leader of a political party who has to handle a very mixed team, as most political leaders have to. If he is successful in keeping his head above water, some one is almost sure to say that he has a genius for compromise, not realizing how damning a compliment that may be. For a genius for compromise may be no more than that a man has a nimble mind and no principles. Bunyan has immortalized this type of character in Mr. By-Ends; and the satire is so rich and pertinent that it is worth recalling. Mr. By-Ends, you remember, is from the town of Fair-speech.

Chr. This town of Fair-speech, said Christian, I have heard of it; and, as I remember, they say it's a wealthy place.

By. Yes, I will assure you that it is; and I have very many rich kindred there.

Chr. Pray who are your kindred there, if a man may be so bold?

By. Almost the whole town; and in particular, my Lord Turn-about, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech, from whose ancestors that town first took its name; also Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Any-thing; and the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-tongues, was my mother's own brother, by father's side; and, to tell you the truth, I am become a gentleman of good quality; yet my great-grandfather was but a water-man, looking one way and rowing another, and I got most of my estate by the same occupation.

Chr. Are you a married man?

By. Yes, and my wife is a very virtuous woman, the daughter of a virtuous woman; she was my Lady Feigning's daughter; therefore she came of a very honorable family, and is arrived to such a pitch of breeding, that she knows how to carry it to all, even to prince and peasant. 'Tis true, we somewhat differ from those of the stricter sort, yet but in two small points: First, we never strive against wind and tide. Secondly, we are always most zealous when Religion gets in his silver slippers; we love much

to walk with him in the street, if the sun shines, and the people applaud him.

And when Christian raised the question how Mr. By-Ends came by his name, this is the answer he receives:

The worst that ever I did to give them an occasion to give me this name was, that I had always the luck to jump in my judgment with the present way of the times, whatever it was, and my chance was to get thereby; but if things are thus cast upon me, let me count them a blessing; but let not the malicious load me, therefore, with reproach.

There is yet more than this in Bunyan's dissection of Mr. By-Ends' soul; and it is all very much worth reading. And there Mr. By-Ends stands forever pictured —to the life—in Bunyan's pitiless gallery of contemptible human types.

Mr. By-Ends and the Vicar of Bray were shrewd, pushful egoists with supple minds. But there is Mr. Pliable who also becomes all things to all men, the man of feeble mind who always agrees with you. Sometimes he is one of those children whom St. Paul speaks of who are "tossed about by every wind of doctrine." At other times, he is the weak, fawning egoist; occasionally, like Uriah Heep, he has a mean cunning of his own; but his prevailing instinct is that of trying to please you, to curry favor with you in order to save his skin; or to gain some advantage by you. And the human judgment on this kind of character is registered in a collection of words which the useful Roget has gathered together into his *Thesaurus:* servile, obsequious, oily, soapy, pliant, cringing, slavish, groveling, sniveling, mealy-mouthed, sycophantic. Than these your dictionary contains no epithets more opprobrious.

It is worth noticing, as we pass, that the frequency of words like these in the dictionary not only registers

the human judgment on a particular type of character, but it also reveals the wholesomeness of the moral sense of common flesh and blood. It is instinctive in human nature to believe that a man should have principles and that he should stick to them. That is why the man in the street admires the martyr: and that is why you have the amazing phenomenon—and not amazing only, but infinitely creditable to our breed, and a gilt-edged security for its future—that a man who in 1914 held and clung to an unpopular opinion and what seemed to be a dangerous opinion, and was hated and execrated by the great majority of his fellow countrymen, should be accepted by those same British fellow countrymen, as their chief officer of state in 1924. It is true that your cynic may say unpleasant things about the capriciousness of public opinion. But again and again public opinion has shown that it knows inflexibility of character and incorruptibility of mind when it sees them. To be sure, when it sees the martyr at close quarters, it is apt to call him a fool. But that is because it has some impure ingredients in its composition. Every man who knows his own heart and is honest about it is well aware that there is a Vicar of Bray, and a Mr. By-Ends, and a Mr. Pliable living there. We all know the temptation to trim our sails for our personal comfort, to face both ways for some private gain. The man is not yet born whose gold is not contaminated with this kind of dross; and his mistakes of moral judgment are made in those deplorable moments of strain when the Vicar of Bray or Mr. By-Ends manages to get the upper hand for a while and throws the moral sense out of gear. But when the strain is past and it gets distance into its vision once more, human nature always makes amends. And so,

the blood of the martyr at last becomes the seed of the Church; and the pillory becomes the most persuasive of pulpits.

II

Forgive me that I have taken so long to come to Paul; it has, I hope, done this for us, that we see that St. Paul's capacity for becoming all things to all men did not imply that he had a flexible and accommodating moral character,—else we should not be speaking about him today. And it would be worth while for our own sakes to look a little closely at this aspect of the man. Shall we then try to find a word which describes this specific quality in him? Adaptability? That is fairly accurate; but it is, I think, a little short of the mark. You *adapt* yourself to a situation you cannot change. You make the best of the inevitable or the immutable. But Paul did more than that. He made his way into this situation or that in order to change it. Shall we say *versatility* then? That I think is stronger and more positive. But still something is lacking. To be versatile is to be able to touch life at many points, to be at home with all sorts and conditions of men and to make them feel at home with you. St. Paul was all that; and something else besides. He could address himself competently to any situation; he could find a point of contact with the most various people. And it was not that he was "hail-fellow-well-met" with Tom, Dick and Harry. He was not exactly a practitioner of "the glad hand." He had a great natural gift of versatility; but his versatility was pointed and deepened by a passion.

He had, to begin with, an unusual background. He was by birth a Jew; by civilization and speech and

perhaps education, a Greek; and by citizenship, a Roman. He was the heir of three notable historical traditions; he was bred into a spacious world; and we can see how the Jew in him came out to meet the Jew: the Greek to meet the Greek: the Roman to meet the Roman. He met them all on their own ground; for their ground was also his. He quotes Scriptures to the Jews; he quotes Greek poets to the Greeks; and he discusses law with the Romans. Add to this the breadth of his human interests. Observe where he gets his illustrations from: from the theater, from the stadium,—he takes at least three forms of athletics as figures for the Christian life: running, wrestling, boxing. He uses agriculture and architecture to give point to his message. It is also to be added that he had a mind which was very prehensile and absorbent. We do not know that he ever directly studied Greek philosophy; but we have in him undoubted echoes of the Stoics and of Philo of Alexandria. All was grist that came into his mill.

But this would not have carried him far if he had not the gift of sympathy. We use the word of our own pity for some one in distress. But sympathy is more than pity. It is fellow feeling,—feeling *with* some one, sharing their distress and sorrow. *To the weak, I became as weak.* That is sympathy,—weeping with them that weep. The secret of this sort of sympathy is, of course, imagination. Half the suffering in the world, said the late John Fiske (I am quoting from memory), is due to a stupid incapacity to put ourselves in the place of other people. Imaginative sympathy is to be able to see the other man's point of view, and to appreciate it even if one does not accept it. That, of course, means toleration; and toleration

means humility and patience. Your arrogant, self-opinionated man can never achieve this saving versatility. He can see no point of view but his own; and there is no truth outside his truth. He can never meet a man on that man's own ground, which means that he never meets him at all. This does not mean that Paul did not have a strain of intolerance. You have only to read this Epistle to see how intolerant he can be of vice in men who ought to know better; and you can discover in Galatians how bigoted he can be against bigotry. There was a limit to his tolerance when he saw men imperiling the moral integrity of the Christian society or putting the souls of men in jeopardy. He was not a mere "good fellow" with an easy-going *camaraderie.* It was not a facile geniality with which he faced men. His versatility, his imaginative sympathy, was governed and directed by a passion: and may we not say that both were also deepened and stimulated by this passion.

Now you may call this a passion for souls or a passion for the Gospel, as you choose. It comes to the same thing in the end. He became all things to all men, *if by all means I might save some . . . and I do all things for the gospel's sake.* And what more need we say concerning this than Frederic Myers has made St. Paul himself say:

Oft when the word is on me to deliver,
  Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare;
Desert or throng, the city or the river
  Melts in a lucid paradise of air,—

Only as souls, I see the folk thereunder,
  Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
  Sadly contented in a show of things;—

Then with a thrill the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!

III

That was St. Paul: and there you have the marks of the Christian that, each in his own measure, you and I should be,—inflexible character, sympathetic imagination, wide, swift versatility baptized into a passion for the Gospel. Hold the mirror up to yourself; and let your conscience tell you how well or how ill you measure up to this standard. I say nothing about natural background, for none of us have Paul's. In any event, it is chiefly an affair of birth and upbringing: and none of us can help his own. Moreover, we are not called to a wide apostolate; few men are. But when we have made all the necessary deductions, what about the rest? Within the compass of my little life, what of the inflexibility of my character, my loyalty to the principles I profess; what of my practice of the sympathetic imagination; how much capacity have I developed of putting myself in the other man's place, of entering into his point of view? How much have I yearned after his soul, longed to bring him to God? Searching, disquieting questions, these, for me: and not less, I trust, for you. I suspect that if we did stand up to them frankly and honestly, we should be pretty miserable men and women. We should be laid under conviction of desperate failure; and perhaps it is as well that we should be.

Take that last point of all, ground and crown of all the rest. *I do all things*, says St. Paul, *for the gospel's sake*. If you and I were to catalog all the

things we do and to analyze the motives from which we do them, we might find among them a few little things which we do directly and solely for the sake of the Gospel. With us the Gospel is an interest, one among many. It is one of the irons we have in the fire. To how many of us is it a functioning motive outside of Sunday? There are some of us to whom it is hardly an interest. It is only a convention. We talk about it; we provide the means to send it to the heathen. We are glad to have it preached to us. But how many of us has it taken captive? I would to God that He might give me or some other man the word to say that would set your hearts aglow with it,—until your soul and mine should burn within us like a flame of fire with the desire and the longing to bring men to Christ. Is it so little a thing, after all, that you and I should be able to trifle with it, to sit lightly to it, to play fast and loose with it, be mildly interested in it, that God sent His Son into the world for us men and for our salvation? Ah, men and women, I am bold to tell you that if once that single but stupendous fact seized our minds and our imaginations, if but once it could penetrate through the thick crust of our dullness and complacency, it would kindle in our souls a fire never to be quenched: and from that time henceforth you would find your joy of life in discovering ways of being all things to all men, if by all means you might save some. We have not seen it yet; we have only heard about it. Some day, please God, we shall both hear and see it.

XIV

THE FINE ART OF DRAWING THE LINE

I Cor. 10, 23: "All things are lawful for me but not all things are expedient. . . ."

THERE is a sentence in the second Epistle to Timothy which Moffatt translates in this fashion: *A competitor in the games is not crowned unless he observes the rules.* He is disqualified; because he has not kept the rules, he has failed to play the game. For it is the rules that make the game. There is no particular fun or skill in merely knocking a ball about with a tennis racket; the sport only comes in when you have to knock the ball about within certain very definitely prescribed limitations. Which thing is, as it was meant to be, a parable of life.

I

When Jesus said it was a narrow gate and a straitened way that led to life, He did not intend us to take narrow and broad as synonymous with *virtuous* and *vicious*. What He meant was that the realization of life is an affair of self-control. If the river of life is to keep on flowing and not to be lost in desert sands, it must flow within banks. A certain self-imposed narrowness is essential to the strength of life. There is a principle of economy, of parsimony, at the very heart

of life. The game of life has its rules; and to ignore the rules is to miss life itself. I am not now speaking only of moral self-control, but of a self-control which has to be exercised even in the face of things in themselves good. You can spread the butter out so thin that you cannot taste it; and you can spread life out so thin that you cease to realize it. You sometimes hear it said of an author that he has written himself out; and his work has become thin, insipid, insignificant. He has written too much. It does not at all follow that because a man is very busy he is getting much done; it may indeed mean that he is getting very little done. He would probably do more if only he would do less. He has so many irons in the fire that he has no time to attend to the fire; and the fire is apt to go out. And the fire is life itself. Life must have its channels, its boundary-lines; and we lose it if we do not limit it. We must needs draw lines around it and respect the lines we draw, if we are to taste its fine and gladdening vintage. It is like a rare old wine that is turned into ditch-water when it is diluted.

The art of life is essentially the fine—and the very difficult—art of drawing the line; and we are involved in the necessity of it because in the wisdom of God we have become free agents. The animal's lines are drawn for it: it follows the law of its own nature; but *we* have to draw lines for ourselves. And it is not alone the immediate requirements of the individual life that impose upon us this necessity, but those conditions by which is made possible the social life which is essential to our growth. It is impossible to create or to preserve a living society without agreeing to do some things together and to abstain together from other things, without (that is) drawing lines. If these lines

are not drawn and every man is a law to himself, takes the law into his own hands and does what seems good in his own sight, then you have not a society but a pack of mutually devouring animals. It is sometimes said that this sort of anarchy would turn society into a jungle; but that is to do an injustice to the jungle. The beasts of the field have their lines and respect them. But it is the penalty of the high pitch to which men have been individualized and of the degree of freedom and intelligence they have reached that they can sink beneath the animals and out-jungle the jungle. Of all animals, man alone seems capable of vice and self-indulgence and anarchy. And it is because many of us will not draw lines for ourselves that lines have to be drawn for us and we have to be compelled to respect them. That is the meaning of law. A law is a compulsory line drawn for men who will not draw the line for themselves: there would be no need of laws affecting personal conduct if only men had self-control.

II

Here comes in the first lesson that we have to learn concerning the meaning of freedom. We are apt to think that freedom is the absence of restrictions; it is, of course, nothing of the sort; for in no place or condition on this earth can such a thing be. You cannot be a law to yourself even on a desert island; your self-will is qualified by the restrictions you have to impose on yourself in order to keep yourself alive. Freedom is not the absence of restrictions; it is the power to choose what restrictions we shall impose on ourselves. Freedom is not license to run amok; it is the privilege of drawing lines for ourselves and not having to be

compelled to observe lines that other people draw for us. And of course if we do not exercise that privilege we shall lose it; we will cease to be free; soon or late we shall find ourselves in jail where life is one ceaseless round of having to respect lines that other people have drawn. Our freedom is primarily the right of self-control, the control of ourselves by ourselves; it is freedom to limit ourselves, to draw our own lines. . . .

And these lines we have to draw if we are to save ourselves alive: and some lines we have to draw very starkly and peremptorily in self-defense. Mr. Chesterton tells the story of a contemporary of his at the Slade School of Art, who had a considerable notoriety for fast living. A fellow student was persuading him to some nameless vice which Mr. Chesterton could not identify. "No," said he, "if I did that, I should cease to know the difference between right and wrong." An arbitrary, irrational thing,—to draw the line just at that point: having gone so far there seems no particular reason why he should stop there. But the man pulled up there; and it was a rational thing to do. There was some instinct that told him truly that if he went one step farther he would kill off his moral sense. There is a sort of borderland, a neutral zone, in matters of conduct, especially in reference to pleasure-seeking, where it is not easy for a man to see where he is to draw the line; but he must draw it somewhere or he will not draw it at all. The place at which he does it may seem arbitrary and logically indefensible; but it is rational and right to draw the line even at an irrational place. For if you do not draw it somewhere, you will soon or late be carried away with the flood. You and I cannot ignore a certain downward pull in our natures. There is a sort of moral gravitation which

is all the time tugging at us; and if we do not draw the line and faithfully observe it, we shall inevitably slide down the slippery slope of moral degeneracy to God only knows what bottomless pit of infamy. The story is told of the present Bishop of London that when a student at Oxford he attended a wine-party; and when the conversation started to become unsavory, he quietly turned his glass down and left the company, —an action which under the circumstances needed some courage. But he was drawing the line, rightly and rationally. There is a limit to the things that a decent man will listen to, to the things he can afford to listen to; and times come when a self-respecting man will take that stark, uncompromising stand. So far, he will say, I go: but not an inch farther. Here we part company.

III

But there are lines which we have to draw for ourselves, not in our own defense but in defense of others; and this is the problem which St. Paul is discussing here. The actual controversy is, so far as we are concerned, as dead as Queen Anne; but it was a very living and burning issue in those days. It had to do with meat sacrificed to idols; and incredible as it may seem, there were two sides to the question; and there had been, no doubt, some very hot debates about it. Some of the Christians in Corinth belonged or had friends who belonged to trade guilds; and these guilds had their patron gods as the guilds of the Middle Ages had their patron saints. So that their public functions had some sort of religious character. At their banquets, the meat that was set before them had sometimes been

first offered on the altar of the guild divinity. Now, on those occasions what was a Christian to do? On the one hand there were puritans who said that Christians should have nothing at all to do with these feasts. *Come ye out from among them and be ye separate,* they quoted. But answered the others: "If we do that, how are we ever to convert them? If we are to bring them to Christ, we must preserve links of fellowship with them. If we cut ourselves utterly away from the life of the world, how shall we redeem the world? It is not only permissible but a plain Christian duty to go to these feasts."

So, you see, St. Paul is not, after all, discussing a dead issue. Its form is changed; that is all. Is it right for a Christian to dance, to smoke tobacco, to play cards for points, to drink intoxicating liquors? Can a man remain a real Christian in modern business? Can a Christian go to war? Is it ever right to tell a lie? To these questions some good people will answer Yes; and others No. At bottom, the problem is still the same: How is the Christian to live in the world and not be of it? Here is a minister who is persuaded that some of the forms in which his fathers stated the truth of the Gospel are no longer valid. If he says what he believes, he is going to hurt the feelings of some very good people. Perhaps he may find himself called to resign. In that event, what about his wife and children? Here is a Christian man who goes into political life. Is he to be loyal to his party through thick and thin because he thinks that in the long run his party's policy is best for the country? Is he at any time to vote against his private convictions lest the best party be thrown out of power? In a time of trade depression, should an employer of labor lower

wages below the fair living standard, or should he pay the living wage and run the risk of going to the wall and throwing the men out of work altogether? And so on, and so on.

There are times like these in the experience of most of us when the business of living feels like tight-rope walking. We are faced with the necessity of deciding or of striking a balance between two opposed courses and both as far as we see equally right; sometimes the sheer urgency and pressure of both courses is so great that the conflict involves us in great and painful perplexity. And so long as we have to thread a course between the dualisms of body and soul, of time and eternity, of individual freedom and social obligation, of world-acceptance and world-rejection, we shall not escape these dilemmas. The best we can hope for is that we may find some means of mitigating them. We should indeed learn something from experience; but life is so incalculable that the course which our ripest experience indicates may land us in disaster. In the game of whist we were told that it was best when in doubt to lead trumps; but in life our problem is mainly that of finding what suit is trumps.

Let us see then whether St. Paul has some guidance for us. "Well," he says, "there is nothing wrong about going to a banquet; there is nothing wrong about eating whatever is set before you. For us, there is nothing common or unclean. There is nothing wrong even about eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols; for we know that that cannot make any difference to the meat. It is still butcher's meat. All the same, if some one raises the question, and it is publicly known that the meat has been sacrificed to idols, then you are rendering yourselves liable to misunderstand-

ing, if you eat it. Your pagan friends may think that you are lowering the flag; and they may lose respect for you. And some of your Christian friends, who do not think as clearly as you do, may think that you are flirting with strange gods, and truckling to idolatry; and it may give them pain and affront their consciences." So," St. Paul says, "I will draw the line for myself there. I will go to the feast; but not if I know it will I eat meat sacrificed to idols. It is perfectly lawful for me to eat meat anywhere and at any time; but here is one occasion on which I will not eat it. I will not eat meat if and when that is going to hurt the conscience of another man, or make it easier for him to compromise with idolatry, or make it more difficult to save a soul."

All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. And there is a point at which a lawful thing may cease to be right *for me.* I have to draw a line, and my problem, therefore, is to know *where* to draw the line. And Paul's solution here is: Draw the line where love tells you to draw it. Hearts, so to speak, are trumps. Take a very modern concrete instance: Should a Christian man go about with the smell of whiskey on his breath? I am not suggesting that there is a law on this subject for Christians. *All things are lawful.* I am free to say to you that when I hear a man laying down the law and saying to me, "Thou shalt not drink," I am more tempted then than I am at any other time in my life to go and get a drink, in order to affirm in the man's face my liberty in the Gospel. And if it were quite as simple as that, I should go and do it. But suppose that after I had had my drink, I should meet a man who was fighting the drink habit, and the smell of alcohol on my breath

should stir up the old craving in him, do you think that to say that I was lawfully exercising my freedom in taking a drink would absolve me from the guilt of having sent that man back to drunkenness? I might drink and be none the worse for it, but can I drink and be sure that no one else will be the worse for it? And as a Christian man, I cannot say that that question does not matter to me.

There is, I think, the chief clew that we need. My freedom is to be controlled by love. St. Augustine said it long ago: "Love and do as you please." That carries the argument a little further than does St. Paul here. He is thinking of love as being a sort of coefficient to my freedom, a kind of check upon it. But St. Augustine tethers my will to love; and does indeed give me the only freedom that in the end is real freedom. Our trouble is that we have so little love, and that we know so little about it. We do indeed talk a good deal about it, but it is sentimental talk without knowledge and understanding. It is an unknown country to us which we have yet to explore; and we are bothered with problems and dilemmas of conduct because we are for the most part groping in a twilight, between the night of self-love and the daylight of love.

I do not know how we are ever to know anything about love except by practicing the little love we have. And that is what St. Paul says, but more concretely. "Do as I do; and I try to do as Jesus did." *Copy me,* he says (and this is the end of his discussion), *as I copy Christ.* He does not anywhere tell us what love is; what he does is to show us the Master lover. And he adds, "Be like Him." Not indeed that we should copy him in a slavish external

way; but that we should carry out the logic of the little love that is in us as He carried out the logic of the love that was in Him. And what manner of love that was, you know,—how that having loved His own to the end, His huge heroic heart still unsatisfied, He stretched out His arms to gather His enemies into His love. I think you will find that love, once you begin to practice it, has no terminus; it is a hunger that grows as it goes along; every world it conquers reveals new worlds for conquest. And though you and I may justly despair of ever having a love like Christ's in its height and depth and length and breadth, we may at least set our faces and hearts that way. And I have the very strong conviction and expectation that as we grow in our will to love, what looks to us now like insoluble problems will solve themselves. Love will show us more and more clearly where to draw lines for ourselves, until at last our feet walk instinctively and freely in a straight path; and we shall be rid of many of the inner conflicts which now vex us and waste our strength. And the sooner the better.

XV

THE SACRAMENT OF LIFE

I Cor. 10, 16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?"

I

In "The Legends of Smokeover," Dr. Jacks describes the evolution of a great agency for redeeming the world out of the grubby and not overcleanly soil of the show grounds at English fairs. It is the story of the growth of the sporting instinct from its lowest and dingiest levels into a constructive faith, and its consecration to the highest ends of man and God. This is a true parable of the way in which life has traveled. In its primal wilderness, it put forth little shoots of aspiration, of vision, of wonder; and these have, by some incredible continuous miracle, grown into great trees that give both fruit and shade to the children of men. Take, for instance, what has been called the highest achievement of the human mind,—the idea of "the sacred." You find its first small beginnings in the crude totems and taboos of primitive society; then came the idea of sacred times and places; and last of all, the great classic division of life into "secular" and "sacred" which overshadows us today. There were and still are all sorts of superstitions clinging to

this growth; but you are, as you study it, on the trail of a movement which is still far from its goal, and perhaps the most important movement in the evolution of life. At first, it was a tiny clearing in the wilderness; it grew until it had enclosed large tracts of life. It cannot stop until the whole wilderness has been redeemed into holy ground.

Palpably the movement is still going on. You can see how the distinction of sacred and secular has been slowly disappearing: and it is indeed our specific business to carry on the campaign and to annex more and more of the wilderness of secularity to the kingdom of the holy. This is an integral part of the Christian undertaking. The Church learned very early that there was nothing common or unclean,—no easy lesson for men cradled in the conviction that they were an elect nation and that the Gentile world lay outside the covenant. They had their holy places; but they learnt that God is to be found wherever there are souls that seek Him in spirit and in truth. They had had their holy days; but they had to learn that every day was holy. They had had a holy caste of priesthood; but they came to see that every believing soul was a priest of God. And this yeast has gone on working in many ways. The ancient belief in the divinity of kings has been displaced by a more rational belief in the divinity of men. We are slowly, today, beginning to grasp the doctrine of the inherent sacredness of personality.

But the fight between the forces of secularity and the forces that make for the consecration of life is hard and fluctuating. There was a moment in the Middle Ages when it seemed as if the influences of consecration were on the point of victory; but the mo-

ment passed and the latter ages of the world have looked upon an orgy of secularization. The distinction between sacred and secular is still fixed deep into the common mind. Life is hopelessly bipartite; and we are amphibious animals that alternate between secularity and sanctity as though this dualism were eternal. But the future of mankind largely depends upon our shaking off this vicious and arresting fallacy and discovering the essential sacredness of the world and all that is in it. We speak of Church and State as though they represented in perpetuity a real division within life itself; and both Church and State are condemned to stagnation until we realize that the goal of both is a society which will be at once both Church and State. The next great revival will, I think, have for its main characteristic that it will teach politicians, business men, plumbers and bricklayers that in the ordinary course of the day's work they are handling holy things; and that their day's work is the service of God. Ours has been a mechanical age; but how many of us have ever seen a machine as a holy thing, have indeed been realistic enough to recognize it for what it is—an extension of the creative skill of God designed for the enrichment and increase of life? It is simply our monumental folly that has permitted us to allow the rich inventiveness with which God has dowered mankind to be used, and to find its highest achievements in the production of engines for the destruction of life. And now this dedication of skill to destruction has gone to such a length that it stands over us like some cosmic Frankenstein that threatens to devour us all,—as it very assuredly may, in the event of another war. God breathe His own sanity into us in time!

But even though we achieved the consecration of life, we are yet some way from the final goal. Already, however, we have intimations of what that goal is like. To conceive of the world, of life, of things, as being sacred is but to acknowledge their divine uses, that they are intrinsically consecrate to the service of God. The next step is to realize that they reveal God, that God is in them and that God may be seen through them; that they are manifestations of the Ultimate Reality. That is to say, we not only conceive of life as being sacred, but also as being *sacramental.*

II

Now, we are familiar enough with this word "sacrament"; but I wonder how often we give a thought to its meaning. It is, we say, an outward and visible sign of something. It is a symbolical act, something we do to represent a process that we cannot see. But a sacrament is more than a symbol; it is an appropriation of the thing the symbol represents; and in consequence the symbol itself is invested with something of the spiritual quality of the hidden process. Sir Oliver Lodge says somewhere that a wooden doll may assume a personal quality; and it is difficult to think that a child nursing a doll is playing a game of make-believe. The relation of a child to its doll is not even an achievement of imagination; it has a certain character of reality. The child is not playing at doing a real thing; so far as the child itself is concerned, it is actually doing a real thing. And I think that in experience we read into our symbolical acts the character of those spiritual attitudes and activities they represent. Our feeling and attitude toward the Flag

has actually grown to be part and parcel of our feeling and attitude toward the Empire. In the same way, our eating and drinking at the Lord's Table has grown to be something more than a symbol of our appropriation of God by faith: it has in a subtle way become a part of the process; and most of us would be hard put to say where the symbol ends and the reality begins. We have come to feel that the whole thing is a single act; and at bottom that has grown out of a quite sound sense that it is an impossible thing to draw a frontier-line between the physical and the spiritual.

But we shall involve ourselves in a mischievous fallacy if we suppose that this peculiar quality inheres in eating a particular bread and in drinking a particular wine. To suppose that we appropriate God alone in the consecrated host is to fall back into the vicious distinction between sacred and secular which we are trying to outgrow. The logic of the sacramental idea requires us to think of God as dwelling in all bread and all wine and in all common things besides: requires also that we should conceive ourselves to be appropriating God in the eating and drinking, the seeing and the hearing of whatever things God has given for our life. Mrs. Meynell has carried out this idea to its logical conclusion in one of her poems,—the beautiful sonnet which was provoked by the boast of the French politician that "they had driven out that Jesus Christ."

> Yes, from the ingrate heart, the street
> Of garrulous tongue, the warm retreat
> Within the village and the town;
> Not from the lands where ripen brown
> A thousand thousand hills of wheat;
> Not from the long Burgundian line,

The southward, sunward range of vine;
Hunted, He never will escape
The flesh, the blood, the sheaf, the grape,
That feed His man,—the bread, the wine.

This is, of course, simply to say that there is no discontinuity between nature and grace,—which if the God of nature be the God of grace would seem obvious. Natural is one with supernatural; and every common bush is aflame with God as truly as is a martyr's heart. The Roman Church has seven sacraments; we have two; but whether seven or two, they miss their point if they do not enable us to discover a thousand sacraments,—if they do not bring us to Francis Thompson's conclusion. He says that he heard all things in heaven and earth say to him:

By this, O Singer, know we if thou see,
When men shall say to thee: Lo! Christ is here,
When men shall say to thee: Lo! Christ is there,
Believe them; yea and this—then art thou Seer
When all thy crying clear
Is but: Lo here! Lo there! Ah me, lo everywhere!

Please observe also that the first step in the sacramentalizing of life is connected with the simple and elementary act of eating and drinking, the very basis of our physical life. The river of life is made sacramental at its source; and it follows that it must be sacramental all the way; in it there is no man or thing common or unclean; and all the relations of life should be luminous with the presence of God. Your family board should be the Lord's Table; your day's work should be as the breaking of bread in which Christ is made known. Your play should be a form of praise; and your friendships means of grace. All life becomes a transparency through which pours upon us the light

of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and all existence becomes a revelation. Aye, and when you see spots upon the sun, those blotches and seams of degradation that dim the light and obscure the glory, when in that light that never was on land or sea you see sin and social injustice and international conflict in their true colors and know them for what they are, then you will have no peace within until you are wholly dedicated to the imperious and imperial business of redeeming the wilderness tracts of life, and transfiguring them until they shine with the sacramental splendor of bread and wine, of human faces and of gorse bushes in bloom, of sunshine and evening star: and every spot of earth has become as the Holiest of All.

III

There is one point which is suggested by the passage from which we started to which we need to give special thought. There is a word repeated in the two questions which St. Paul asks,—the word *koinonia*, translated "communion." It may be rendered too as fellowship, or by any word that signifies a living sociability. St. Paul has in mind here the distinction between the pagan guilds and the mystery cults on the one hand, and the Church on the other. They have their feasts, their common cups: and we have ours. But remember that our common cup is the sign of our communion in the blood of Christ; and the bread we eat is our communion in the body of Christ. Our fellowship rests upon a common redemption which we share; and just as we partake of a common loaf, we are ourselves a single loaf, not a collection of redeemed souls but a

single body. The Church of God is at once the promise and the agent of the redeeming and unifying purpose of God; nay, even more,—it is that Christ who became in Jesus incarnate in a body of flesh and is now incarnate in a body of people; and the sacramental meal is the bond of a sacramental society.

This raises difficult and troublesome questions for ourselves. How far do we live up to this conception of us? Do we convey to the world the same kind of impression—the same kind if not the same intensity—that Jesus conveyed? It is useless to press such enquiries as these: the answer is a foregone conclusion. But we do well to remind ourselves of what we should be. And this is another of the tests by which we may judge ourselves. We are, I said, a sacramental society; but we are even more. It is our business to be a sacrament-making society. We are in the world to enable men to regard and treat all life as a sacrament. Just as bread and wine speak to us of God, so we should be able to make ourselves and other people hear God crying to us out of the cloud and out of the sunset, out of the day's work and out of the play of children; aye, and just as we should feel our fellowship on a Sunday morning athrob and alive with the presence of God, so we should be communicating to mankind a sense of life and all that is in it as alive and aflame with that same presence. But we accomplish this only as we are together a plain, readable mirror of God to men. It is a high, a dizzyingly high calling for folk like us: that we opaque little creatures should be set to transform this scheme of things into a transparency through which men can see the face of God. But there it is: and that we are embodied into the Church of God means that we have accepted the

task. And it is now our business to see to it that we do not in this fail God and man at the same time.

But all these general and corporate responsibilities reduce themselves in the end to strictly personal ones. And the Church will be no sacrament nor will it show to man the thousand sacraments in earth and sky, in fields and common life, except we ourselves be sacraments. That is a terrific thought, which might well paralyze us into despair. But it is nothing so desperate, after all: if you and I will consent to pay the price of purity and love, then the gleam of an invisible Shekinah will be on the breast of every one of us and the very light of God will shine from out our eyes. And if we do not succeed in revealing God to man, it is at least something that in our dealings with men we suggest to them a thought of Him.

XVI

THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY

I Cor. 12, 31: "And a more excellent way show I unto you. . . ."

And with no more overture than that, suddenly as a bird into song, St. Paul breaks out into his great Psalm of Love.

I

There was a riot of what were called "gifts" in this Corinthian Church: and they were holding up the genuine traffic of life; and Paul had to argue and to plead for a sense of proportion, for some sort of discrimination between passing eccentricities of the spiritual life and the permanent business of living. These "gifts" of tongues and prophecy which seem to have been chiefly responsible for the disorderly worship of the Corinthian Church belong now to the departments of antiquities and morbid psychology. We do not know exactly what they were; though we have in times of religious revival seen some phenomena that appear to have a family likeness to them. But they were abnormal states of soul, perhaps inevitable in times of great psychical stress; certainly they were not conditions to be encouraged or to be regarded as permanent. Now and again, there are deliberate attempts to revive

these ancient aberrations; and human nature is still so unstable that if you only keep religious excitement up high enough and long enough, you can put folk of the weaker sort beside themselves; and on this plane of irrationality your saints are the "holy rollers," and your bright particular religious genius is "Jump-to-glory Jane." But this is to eject mind out of religion.

And that St. Paul would not do; you have only to read the fourteenth chapter to see the strong sanity of the man, insisting that all religious exercises should be intelligible to the congregation. *I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also. . . . I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.* That was, of course, the common sense of the matter. But that was not the whole trouble. Evidently the people in Corinth who possessed these gifts were something boastful of them: supposed themselves to be a breed of finer, more privileged fiber than the rank-and-file Christian; and they exercised their gifts in vanity,—so frail is flesh and blood that a man will seize the most trivial advantage and magnify it into a pedestal from which he can enjoy himself condescending to his neighbor. But people of this kind imposed upon themselves a double unintelligibility. Not only did the hearers not understand their jargon; but they lacked that higher intelligibility which is given by sympathy, that final lucidity which is born of love. *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal*—merely something that makes a noise. Eloquence,

as we are aware, is not necessarily intelligibility: you and I have listened to overwhelming and seemingly coherent verbosity that said less than nothing at all to us. There is a rhetoric which is mere gibberish. Nor indeed does even the most meticulous precision and simplicity of speech guarantee intelligibility. You may be able to read a meaning of your own into what the man is saying—but it does not at all follow that you have got his meaning. Before you can understand what he is saying, you have to understand him: your mind must march with his; your heart must beat with his heart. There must be literal *sympathy* between him and you,—which is to say that before any man can impart thought or knowledge to any purpose, he must do a very much greater thing,—he must impart himself. He must give himself away before he begins to speak; else he will be giving himself away in a quite different sense while he is speaking. He will reveal that his heart is not in his job but in himself, and that he is using his gift and his opportunity as an occasion to vanity.

All of which, to be sure, is most sound doctrine for me and for people like me, whose main business in life is this of public utterance. If a preacher does not love the folk he is preaching to, he is no better than a talking machine; and they would probably be better off with a gramophone sermon. If it be not his fundamental passion to pass on what he has, he had better far, for his own sake, keep his mouth shut. Certainly if it is his own vanity that he wants to feed, some other place than a pulpit would be safer for him: for there is no perversion of the grace of God so hideous as to use the word of God and the saving of souls as a pretext for cutting a figure.

II

And love is simply and exactly this: *giving oneself away;* and the Church of God, as St. Paul saw it, was a society of people who lived to give themselves to each other and to give themselves together to mankind. Within the Church it was to be a sort of free communism at the deepest level of life; and we should have less agitation for a more equitable distribution of things on levels less deep if there were more of this spiritual communism abroad in the world. Wealth would distribute itself easily and without fuss; and it would play the most fantastic tricks with the current orthodoxies of economics. We should be, without knowing it, the most revolutionary socialists imaginable. For when a man has ceased to hold himself as private property, it does not seem clear how he can hold any other property. If he is no longer his own, how then can anything else be his,—except, of course, that then, as St. Paul says, everything is his? If only this miracle of love could be wrought upon us, we should have so far-reaching and so beautiful a revolution that by the side of it every other revolution would look a trivial and shabby mess. It would be easy to grow dithyrambic over such a prospect. Alas, that it should seem so useless. For there are no signs of that revolution that I can descry upon any horizon in sight. For we are shockingly slow to perceive the sheer common sense of love, to discover in it the springs of all those things that belong to our peace. We are willing to love just so far and so long as it suits us; but the virtue of love lies in loving after it has ceased to suit us.

So, if St. Paul is to be trusted, we are headed for mere futility. Here is your gifted man, full of learning and recondite knowledge,—well, it is easy to see how little he will amount to without love. For a man may be a miser of the mind no less than a miser of the pocket. He may take occasion to display his knowledge: but that makes no difference. It is grist for his own mill and for no other man's. It is love only that can vitalize thought and knowledge and make them live in other men's minds. The loveless scholar is a blind alley; the unloving thinker is a dead end.

And there is your man of faith,—it is rather a terrible thought that a man may have a mountain-moving faith and yet come to nothing. But I think I know the kind of man that St. Paul is thinking of. Our own Calvinistic tradition has bred a good many of them; they have been pretty common in Scotland and Wales and New England. Strong, stern souls who would go to the stake for the things they believed; who for the sake of God made themselves the terror of the countryside; inflexible in their own self-discipline, iron-handed in their judgments on human frailty: but without bowels of compassion. I confess that I should hesitate to say that that kind of character goes for nothing; but St. Paul says so, and you must make what you can of it.

And there, too, is your philanthropist who gives by the million—that public-spirited citizen, as the papers call him. But what if he have only a purse where his heart should be? Have you ever considered how much of our charity is of this detached, impersonal and loveless kind? In these days when—and we should blush with the pain and the shame of it—human distress and degradation are so widespread and

so various that charity has to be organized and reduced to an exact science, there is a perpetual danger lest it be dehumanized. It may become merely an affair of the machine and the expert; it may and often does lose what we call the "human touch" (what is only an apologetic way of speaking of love). As the Lord liveth, do not—no, not for a moment—suppose that you have discharged your responsibility for human need when you have sent your check to the Federated Charities. Send your check, by all means; but that does not absolve you from pity: and when I speak of pity, I do not mean a vague, sentimental compassion for human need in the bulk, but intelligent pity for actual needy people. We cannot by any money payment get quittance from hand-to-hand, heart-to-heart dealing with men and women in distress; to do so is indeed to starve our own hearts. And be very sure that your charity is milk gone sour when your compassion is tainted with contempt or your pity is poisoned with patronage. Philanthropy without love is, after all, but self-love; and charity without love is like Hamlet with Hamlet left out, a shell without a kernel, a skeleton without flesh.

III

I wish I could tell you what love is. I have often attempted a definition of it; but at the end am left with the sense that the thing itself has "broken through language and escaped." It is like reducing a flower to a formula, like a scientific explanation of a sunset. It is not to be done. It is like life itself in that. We cannot tell what life is; we may talk about cells and protoplasm and other things: but we

are no nearer saying what life is. But we do know a living thing when we see it; and it is so we know love: we know love in action. We recognize it by the way in which it behaves. You will observe that St. Paul here does not say what love is; he only speaks of what love *does*. *Love suffereth long and is kind . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things.* And it is well worth noticing how simple, commonplace and undramatic the things are by which love reveals itself. They are not spectacular things, things that call attention to themselves. Love sometimes does sensational things, but it never means to; it does not cry out from the housetops. It prefers to operate out of sight, like one of those shy plants that love seclusion. It shirks the limelight. I remember reading the remark years ago, that there's many a man whose left hand does not know what his right hand doeth simply because there is no news: there is, as the saying goes, "nothing doing." But it is often the case too that a man's left hand does not know what his right hand doeth because love issues no report. It is the strange eccentricity of love that it has no news to tell: it runs no publicity department.

And yet St. Paul says it is the greatest thing in life: I think if you had pressed him he would have gone further and said that it is the only life there is. All else is vanity and lies and ashes. He also says that it is the enduring thing, the most enduring of all things. That is, I think, what he is chiefly concerned about here. He knew that these so-called "gifts" were abnormal and therefore temporary. People cannot live on that plane of strain and tension all the time; and it is notorious that conditions of prolonged religious excitement lead to both mental and moral disaster.

But even though the high tension subsides before leading to disaster, what are we going to live on afterward? What residue will there be to carry us through the humdrum times to follow? The shouting and the tumult die; but what shall we have to go on with? After we have shed the eagle's wings, we shall have to walk: and what is the rule for pedestrian days? Those of you who have passed through the experience of a religious revival know that these are not idle questions. The crowds, the waves of emotion, the enthusiasm, the ecstasies, the publicity,—we are familiar with the outward and visible signs of revivalism; and I say nothing more about them than that they are there. But I suspect that St. Paul would have asked: Do the folk love each other a little better than they did? Souls have been saved, you say; but pray tell me: is there less pride, less vanity, less uncharitableness, more patience, more sympathy, more brotherhood in the community? How much ordinary, simple, unassuming love came out of the affair? This, he would say, is the only thing that can carry you along through the plain prosaic wilderness across which your journey lies. This is the only thing that can give you staying power, the one precious thing that lasts and survives all ups and downs of the road. And this has its moral for our ordinary congregational life. Your pulpit might be occupied by an archangel and your choir be a host of cherubim; but they are a mere noise if they don't make you love one another better; and they will preach and sing in vain except you be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another,—as God in Christ hath forgiven you; and your Church will die before your eyes.

There are more things than this that St. Paul would

say of love. He would, for instance, say that love is the only thing that can make you really rational, that can help you to clear, straight thinking. Lovelessness dims and dulls the mind; it is a sort of myopia which does literally prevent a man seeing beyond his own nose. His cosmos, as was said of some one, is all Ego; and he lives blind to the rest of reality. And so far from making you a sentimentalist, love makes you a realist. For it is a pure illusion to say that love is blind. Love has eyes all around its head; and it sees truth that is hidden from the unloving. Some one has said that you cannot understand Wordsworth unless you love him; but that is universally true. You never truly understand anything or anybody that you do not love; nor will you see or say the truth about men and things until you love them.

And I am sure that St. Paul would say concerning love that it is the only thing that can enable us to live effectually. The man who lives in pride and envy and hate is living on his moral capital; for these things bring no return to his soul. They eat him up and leave him destitute. But love is that strange commodity, whereof the more you give the more you have. Every word or act of love adds to your moral reserves; mercy, as Portia says to Shylock,—mercy, which is a part of love,—

> is twice blessed.
> It blesseth him who gives and him who takes.

It is like some shining seaway that bears on its waves rich argosies that come and go with precious cargoes never diminished, enriching both him who sells and him who buys. Some day we shall be wise enough to see that it is better to make a friend than to make

a fortune, to have cultivated a genius for fellowship than to have acquired laurels of fame, to become rich in love than to grow replete with things. And the only way to become rich in love is to practice it and cherish it. I saw the other day a remark like this: Life does not consist in having a good hand but in playing a bad hand well. And most of us have bad hands,—hands made bad by our own folly and perversity and indolence; but there is a secret for playing bad hands well. And it is just this that St. Paul is speaking of here. You can infallibly turn the worst hand in the world into a winning hand, if you play it in "this most excellent way," this way of love.

And if you doubt these things that I say, what can I do more than bid you consider the old, old story of the Master Lover?

XVII

THE LIFE-BEYOND-LIFE

I Cor. 15, 32: "If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

THIS Corinthian Church seems to have been like some delicate infant that catches all the maladies that young children are exposed to; but with the difference that this infant Church suffered from all sorts of diseases at the same time. From the first chapter to the last of the Epistle the writer is dealing with what in our modern jargon we call "problems"; and they are all problems of inward disorder. The Epistle is a rich but not very pleasant study in ecclesiastical pathology; but it is something of a surprise to discover that skepticism is included among these distempers at Corinth. You do not usually associate skepticism with childhood. Childhood is the time of the happy, undisciplined fancy, when, as Francis Thompson says, we turn pumpkins into coaches and mice into horses. Something of that naïve credulity there was indeed at Corinth; but there was skepticism, too. Just how much there was or how deep it went, we have no means of knowing, except that there was enough of it and that it went deep enough to stir up St. Paul to the most daring, most imaginative and dramatic piece of writing in the letter.

I

And indeed, the matter was serious. For the skepticism was directed upon the very citadel of the new faith. It was skepticism about immortality; and it threatened the whole Pauline scheme of things. It was a dangerous thrust at the spiritual interpretation of life and the universe: and it undermined and disintegrated the whole edifice of faith and life which St. Paul was laboring to build. Now, I can conceive it possible as a matter of theory to lose faith in personal immortality and yet continue to hold a spiritual view of the meaning and ends of life; but I am sure that St. Paul is right in thinking that in practice skepticism about immortality is bound to kill interest in a spiritual view of life. For the spiritual view of life means that there is an end for life beyond the life that we can see: and if we cannot share in that life beyond life, why then should we bother our heads about it? We will eat, drink and have what we call a good time: for tomorrow we die.

We may, of course, be told that there is some splendid goal ahead of the race; and that may stir us to seriousness for a time; but I doubt whether that can hold us permanently. For it requires an attitude toward ourselves which we cannot take and which would be unreal and false. It implies a quite impossible kind of self-denial. I may deny my egoism, but I cannot deny my Ego. I may suppress my selfishness; but I cannot ignore my selfhood. In the divine providence, life has been individualized and enfranchised in man as in no other living thing; and if this individualization and freedom (with all that they mean in possibilities of self-consciousness and self-

realization) are to be dissipated in some general future good of which I shall not be aware and in which I cannot share, there seems to be no special meaning in me as *me:* and no particular purpose seems to be served by giving me this individualized and independent life. *I cannot renounce my hope of immortality and still go on taking myself seriously.* If my selfhood is not a real and permanent thing, why should I struggle to improve it, to refine it, to perfect it? If I am not a real end in myself and for myself, but only a means to some unknown and unimaginable end in some unthinkable future which I shall never see, well, then, I shall be disposed to say: Let the power that appointed the end look out for it. I am not interested in it. Perhaps I ought not to say this; and this attitude may be but a mere form of egoism, a gross overestimate of the significance of myself. Perhaps it is; but I cannot help it. For me, it is only that I am taking myself seriously, with the seriousness that seems to me to be due to the product of a hundred and fifty million years of evolution. And it is indeed only as I take myself thus seriously that I shall count in the future evolution of mankind in time. So we reach this paradox; if I am to help to make the human race better, finer, more splendid in itself and in its achievement here on this platform of time and place, I shall do so only as I qualify for immortality.

As I qualify for immortality—please observe this expression. For I fail to find evidence in Scripture or out of it that justifies me in believing in the intrinsic immortality of every soul. Certainly in this chapter there is no indication of a general immortality. We have to assume (to use Professor J. Y. Simpson's convenient term) the immortability of every living

soul. But it does not follow that the immortable will necessarily become immortal. Not every corruptible will put on incorruption. St. Paul here confines immortality specifically to a class of people whom he describes as *those who are Christ's*—and he says nothing about the rest. The immortals are they who have passed through a particular experience and have gained a new quality of life.

II

Now, unless I am very much mistaken, our future statement of the Christian Gospel and of the Christian hope must dig very deep into this chapter. I am not sure that, though the great dramatic flare of trumpets in which the chapter triumphantly ends will continue to move men while they remain sensitive to inspired imagination clothed in inspired speech, it adds very much to our calm philosophy of life and death. It is a poet's song of victory rather than the thinker's reasoned faith. The reasoned faith we shall have to seek elsewhere in the chapter.

Have you ever thought out the significance of the fact that human history is dated either B.C. or A.D.? These are the years of the Lord: and that we call them so means that mankind has felt that it had somehow a new beginning, a fresh start in Jesus of Nazareth. The first man to make that discovery was (as I have said before) St. Paul; and the more deeply I have dug into this Epistle the more sure am I that that discovery is the clew to St. Paul's permanently valid thought. Here in this chapter he tells us more specifically the nature of this new beginning.

His philosophy of the matter is crystallized into

that strange saying: *Even as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Now we need not worry very much about the hypothetical figure of Adam: St. Paul is simply dramatizing the truth that mankind has had two origins and that from these have followed two successions. There are two planes of life: the life that by the processes of nature we inherit from the first man; the other that by the action of the Spirit we inherit from Christ. In Adam, man began the life which is the life of mortality; in Christ he has received the life of grace, which is life eternal. The first man Adam became a living soul, and he begat children and children's children, who, like him, are living souls; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit and He has begotten a new race of men and women who, like Him, are life-giving spirits.

You know how there have been in the evolution of life moments when a new principle has appeared or a latent principle awoke. Once, for instance, some forms of life broke away from their moorings and made a bid for freedom. And so began the great division of life into plants and free-moving animals. At another point consciousness broke forth out of sentiency; and at still another, self-consciousness appeared out of consciousness. So life has marched on: now and again executing these momentous transitions which brought to birth new qualities, new refinements, new powers of life out of the loins of the old. What mysterious and subtle influence was at work, who can tell? But so it happened. And now comes this last of the great transfigurations. Out of the natural self-consciousness has shot out the light of a spiritual-consciousness, once more a new refinement, a new intensity of life. The soul is transmuted into spirit. The life

of nature has blossomed forth into the life of grace. And this miracle, this last creative transition, came in and by Jesus of Nazareth. That is what, translated into a modern idiom, St. Paul means.

III

Concerning this new life, St. Paul suggests these things: *First,* it is a life which is aware of a yearning for immortality: nay, is indeed possessed of some immortal virtue. It has cast the spell of the infinite over us, and that we feel as the ancients never felt it. Perhaps that is, after all, the profoundest difference between B.C. and A.D.—this intuition of other-worldliness. The French poet Musset says that an immeasurable hope has crossed the earth; and in spite of ourselves we must needs lift our eyes to the heavens.[1] We are afflicted with a nostalgia for the eternal: we have come to feel homeless at home:

> So between this starry dome
> And this floor of earth and seas,
> I have never felt at home,
> Never wholly been at ease.[2]

We are haunted by a sense of freedom that we have yet to gain, by the promise of a spaciousness which still lies beyond our horizons. We hear within us the echo of a call out of an unknown that claims us for its own. Within us we are aware of overtones and undertones that have no earthling origin. We feel we belong to

[1] "Une immense espérance a traversé la terre,
Malgré nous, vers le ciel il faut lever les yeux."
[2] Sir William Watson.

a land we have never seen. Our souls are growing wings with which some day we hope to fly free. . . .

Second, This life is a quickening vitalizing life. It evokes itself in other souls. The natural man is a blind alley, a *cul-de-sac;* he is the end of the road. He is the last term of a series; with him a stage, an epoch closes. That is why in St. Paul's time he had begun to degenerate. The stream of life was dammed up in him and was turning into a cesspool. That is the meaning of that grim picture in the first chapter of Romans: and of the decadence of Greek thought and religion of which the historians tell us. The old legend of how some sailors out at sea heard a mysterious voice borne upon the breeze saying, "Pan, great Pan, is dead," is a parable of the self-consciousness of a world that knew itself to be under sentence of death. Into that moribund world came the last Adam, a life-giving spirit, touching this man and that with the virtue of his own life; and mankind had not so much a new lease of life as a new birth into a different kind of life. Not every man has it; but it is not difficult to identify it in the man who possesses it. It is the life that I have called "radio-active"; a life that communicates itself, that evokes itself in other souls. It is a contagious thing that affects whatever it touches. It is the life of the man whose presence makes you glad to be alive; whose touch quickens new hope in you; whose face startles your conscience into active self-criticism; whose word is a means of grace. Of his own over-plus he gives you a share, not of intention; but because it is there and he cannot help himself. The natural man is a stagnant pool; the spiritual man is a river of living water where thirsty souls may come and drink.

Third, the reality of this life is guaranteed by the Resurrection of Jesus. For the empty grave tells us that the death of the body is not the end of life. It is true that the natural life, whether in man or in beast, ends in death; but there is a quality of life which is not affected by bodily death and persists through it: and of that immortality, the Resurrection is the symbol and the guarantee. The quickened spirit cannot be touched by death. Nature may do its worst; and the earthly tabernacle may be dissolved. But life has still its building from heaven, a house not made with hands.

IV

This is why St. Paul becomes so jubilant. He is exulting in the frustration of nature, in the discomfiture of death. Death has lost its sting of significance; to those who have this superlife, death simply does not matter any more; and every grave may henceforth be an empty grave. But beyond this St. Paul does not carry us. Concerning the life across the frontier of death, he says but little and that vaguely: and where he is silent, it is idle for us to speculate. Not all the inquisitive and rather vulgar siege that has been laid to that undiscovered world in our days has yet succeeded in making it yield up any of its secrets; and of all the discoveries which the psychical researchers aver that they have made, there are none that I have seen which do not suggest a life so mean, so contemptible, so silly, that for my part, I would rather perish with the beasts than share it. For myself, I want to be kept clear of all prying, indecent curiosity about the other world: for I want to face the great awakening with a mind virgin and undebauched. "To die,"

said Peter Pan, "will be a great adventure," and I want to keep it so. It is enough for me that I have my passport. And I am concerned for little more than this,—that I may, when my time comes, go down into the valley with undoubting, unfearing footfall, my beloved and a friend or so near by to bid me farewell, before I go on alone (as I must) to those inscrutable portals which, swinging open, disclose the road that brings me where I belong. And then,—well.

> Suffice it if, my good and ill unreckoned,
> And both forgiven by Thine abounding grace,
> I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
> Unto my fitting place,—
>
> Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
> Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
> And flows for ever through heaven's green expansions
> The river of Thy peace.

And in that hope, I am content to carry on. . . .

To carry on here, until my hour comes: and that is precisely the moral that St. Paul draws. "Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

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